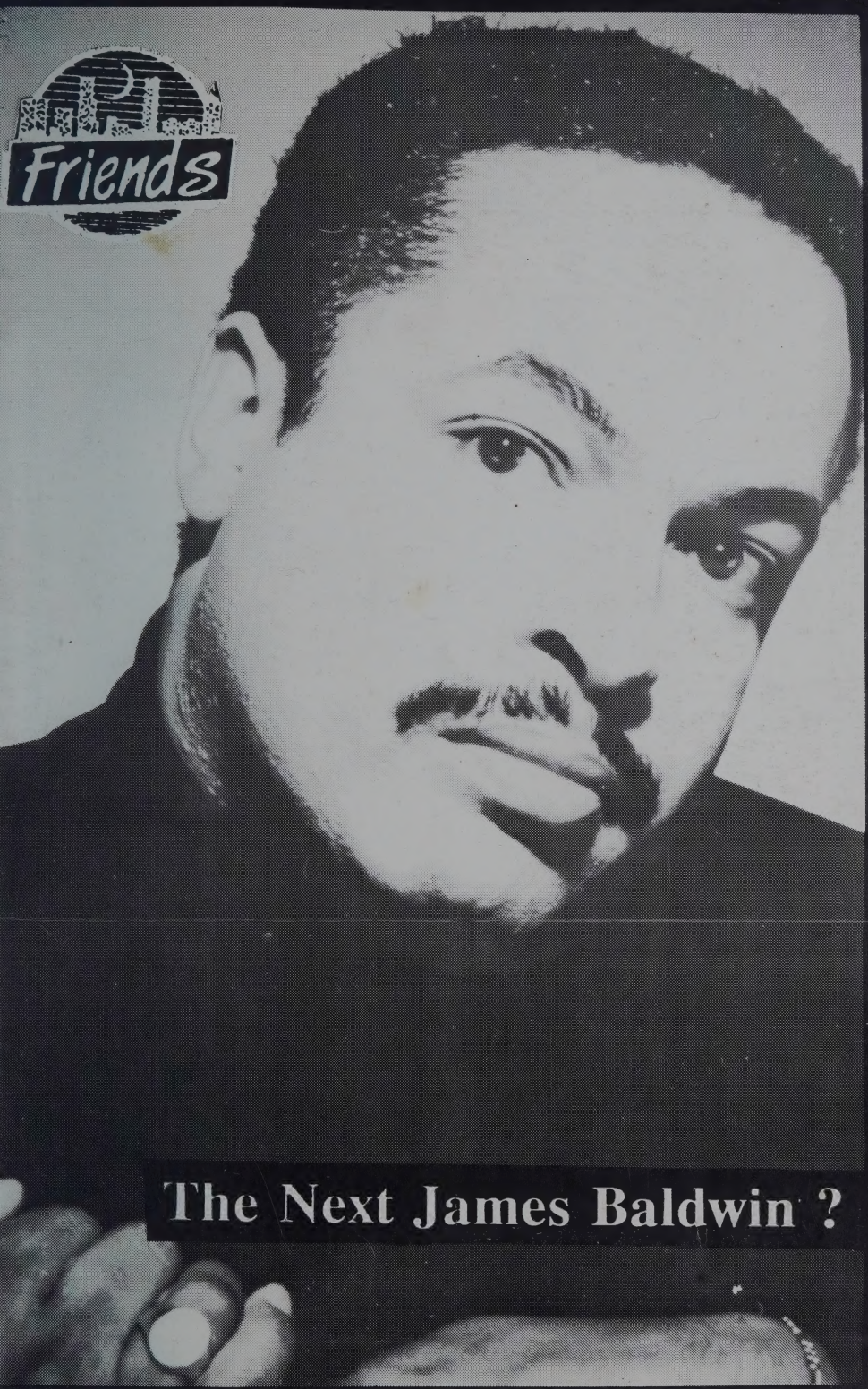
Friends
The Next James Baldwin ?

TRAXX EVENTS FOR APRIL

TRAXX

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Every Thursday - SCHOOL DAZE

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DJ Nic Hillsman

Every Saturday
OOH LA LA DANCE PARTY
DJ Keith Stephens
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Easter Sunday
TESTIFY !!
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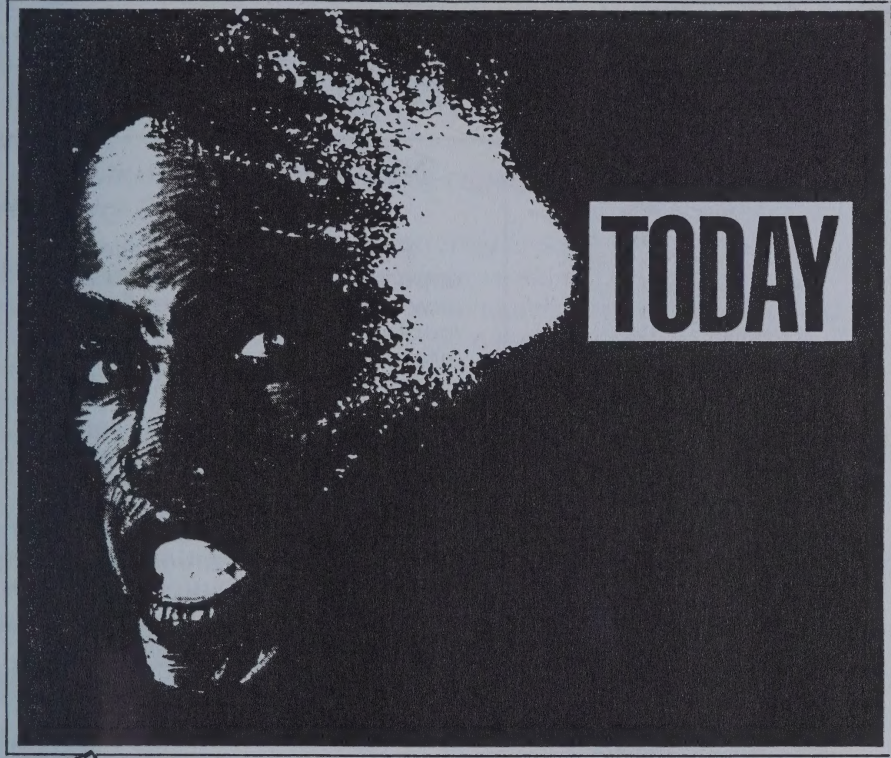

Catch it.

Jomandi Productions and AT&T: *OnStage* invite you to experience the impact of theater as timely as *Today*. This new play by Decatur's own Valetta A. Anderson chronicles an African-American woman's liberating discovery of her own power to abandon the past and embrace the future. Directed by Andrea Frye, *Today* plays now through May 3 at the 14th Street Playhouse, 173 14th Street, Atlanta; call 404 873-1099 for tickets.

$2.00 OFF WITH THIS AD

AT&T

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FRIENDS

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Leonard

New National Black Gay Publication

Friends would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new monthly publication. Each month we will provide you with information that we hope will be both entertaining and informative.

Friends publication evolved to provide some unification for our constantly expanding community, and to enable us to share current information on entertainment, events, bars, organizations, fashion, grooming, health, business, and news pertaining to the Black gay community. We are hoping this magazine will serve as a means for us to network on a national level.

Friends is distributed FREE monthly through participating bars, organizations and businesses. *Friends* will be mailed directly to your home for the low subscription rates:

6 months ...	$10.00
12 months ...	$20.00

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COVER

E. Lynn Harris, author of Invisible Life. See cover story, p. 10

Vol. 1 • No. 4
April 1992

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

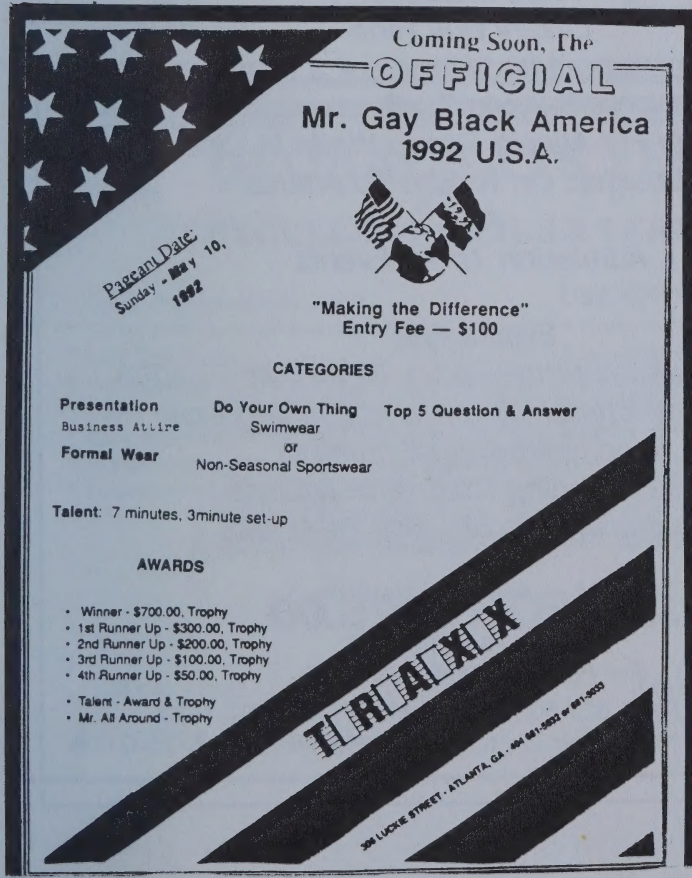
Dear Friends,

As always we hope this publication reaches you in the best of health and the highest of spirits.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped to make "Friends", the magazine, a reality. We thank the writers who contributed their wonderful talents, the staff who worked to make it all happen, the advertisers who took a chance on a new idea, and you, the community, whose support reaffirmed that we are on the right path. It is a true testimony to what can be accomplished when we work together. We also thank the community for acknowledging the writers and advertisers for their participation in this magazine.

We hope that the information included in the publication will continue to encourage and nurture this spirit of community and networking and that we will all benefit and grow stronger from it.

With love and appreciation .... Gloria



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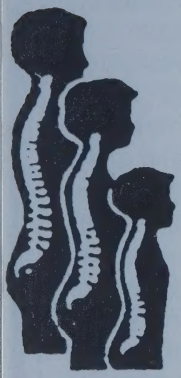

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NEWS

TASK FORCE UPDATE

The Gay & Lesbian Task Force recently appointed by the Public Safety Committee of the Atlanta City Council has elected its co-chairs. The two persons elected (both African-Americans) are Joan Garner and Ricky Wilson.

If you have any problems that need to be addressed by the Public Safety Task Force put them in writing and bring them to the Task Force's monthly public meeting which are held the 3rd Tues. of every month, 7:00 pm at City Hall

STRAIGHT BUT NOT NARROW
Straight People in Support of Gay and Lesbian Rights

Straight But Not Narrow is intended to be a cohort organization to the spectrum of gay rights groups – following the lead of gay people to help make this a safe and fair society for people of all sexual orientations.

This group will not be limited to straight people. It cannot exist without gay support and guidance. Contact 892-7907 (Emily) for more information.

ATLANTA LAMBDA COMMUNITY CENTER

The Atlanta Lambda Community Center was organized in December, 1991 to provide an inclusive meeting space for all lesbian and gay organizations, a clearinghouse for community issues, and an activity and performance site open to all individuals and groups in the community. The purpose of the organization is to bring together members of the culturally, economically and politically diverse gay and lesbian communities to crate a working center to service and empower these women and men living in the Atlanta area. The community center board of trustees will accomplish this through a series of "town hall" meetings and an open committee meeting structure that will incorporate everyone wanting to participate in the creation of this center. The next open meeting is April 27, location to be announced. Call (404) 662-9010 for more information.

NEW MEMBERS "MIXERS"

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta invites interested individuals and couples to check us out at a series of Thursday night *mixers* 8pm-10pm, April 2nd and May 7th. Location and directions can be obtained by calling 892-BWMT.

SELF DEFENSE COURSE

For women and children, Sun., April 12th at Georgia Baptist Preventive Medicine Bldg. Adults $7.00, children free For more information call 244-9557.

Get Your Copy of Atlanta's New Bestseller!

Invisible Life

a novel by

E. Lynn Harris

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Invisible Life
by *E. Lynn Harris*

Invisible Life available at **First World Bookstores, Shrine of Black Madonna** and **Oxford Books.** Autographed copies available by sending a check for $15.95 to: **The Consortium Press,** 1447 Peachtree Suite 1011, Atlanta, Georgia 30309

SPOTLIGHT ON TRAXX

TRAXX – the largest black gay dance club in the south is still hard at work providing the best in music and entertainment for Atlanta's black gay community.

Traxx opened Nov. 16, 1989 with the concept of being a house music club with a special inference on entertainment. During its 21/2 years of operation TRAXX has hosted a number of events which included being the host club for the 1990 National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Conference

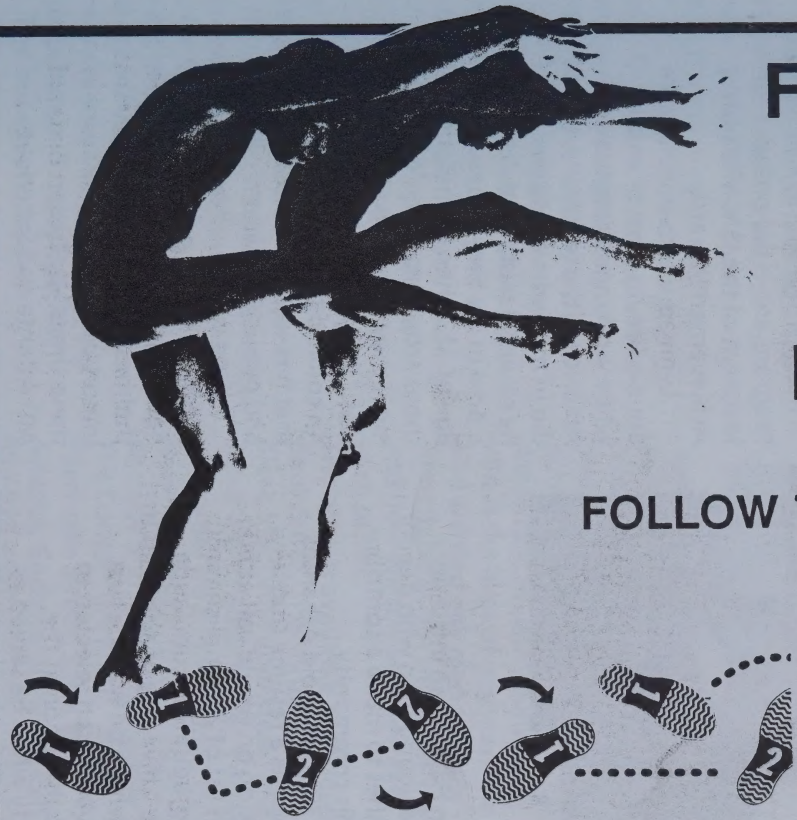
TRAXX Staff

that was held in Atlanta. TRAXX has also featured a number of top entertainers such as Evelyn King, Martha Wash, and Jennifer Holliday.

The driving force behind TRAXX's success is David Hampton, the club's general manager. A Detroit native, David moved to Atlanta in 1981 to attend Morehouse College. He knew before graduation that he wanted to make Atlanta his home and to be involved in the operation and management of a club which would have a northern attitude.

David Hampton
General Manager

David looks forward to the future and the continued support of the gay and lesbian community. He also wants to use TRAXX as a place to educate the community about AIDS and to support those who are infected with the virus by making the club available to groups and organizations for benefits and fundraisers. David contributes the success of TRAXX to his hard working staff, loyal members, and patrons and knows it is important to give back to the community. He says, "this is just the beginning."



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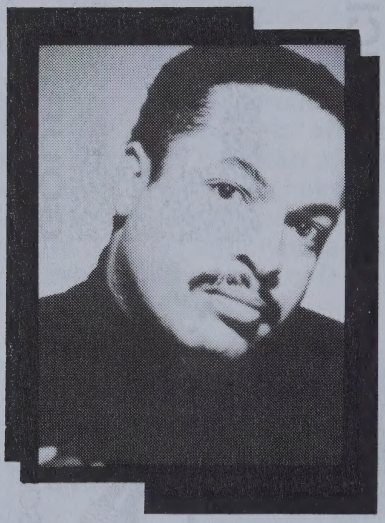


Lynn Harris is an introspective young man who deeply wishes to make a contribution to his community.

The 30ish year old Arkansas native boasts a resume that anyone looking on would call admirable. His list of accomplishments include graduating cum laude from the University of Arkansas in 1977 – where he was the first African-American selected to head a publication at the University when he served as editor of the 1977 Razorback Yearbook. After graduation he was employed by IBM as a marketing representative in Dallas, Texas. He received honors in the IBM Marketing Training Program and is the proud recipient of the IBM Marketing Achievement Award.

Lynn admits to having led a double life, as most of us do, while working in corporate America. "Quite frankly, what I did in my bed was my business," he recently said. "But there came a time in my life - - - around the age of 32, when I questioned if those around me would still love me if they knew who I really was." This was the beginning of his coming out process. A process that has lead him into a writing and publishing career.

Lynn is the author and publisher of the controversial new novel Invisible Life, a novel that has been called "...the most important piece of literature in these times" by Dazon Dixon of AID Atlanta and Sisterlove

OVER

RRIS

Bell

Why is this book so important? Because for the first time a black man has written a book about the lives of bi-sexual black men.

The author has tackled a subject matter that has been swept under the rug of our community for hundreds of years and has never been examined or discussed. "They know it exists, or they don't want to know it exists," he adds. Harris hopes Invisible Life will bring to focus issues that have been ignored by the African American community and the media. "The book is about telling the truth, no matter what the costs," he said recently.

Many people of both sides of the "coin" often question the reality of bi-sexuality. This book confirms that fact. The book isn't representative of all bi-sexual men or gay men. It was never meant to be. But it does allow us and others to see for the first time, what it is like to be a black, bi-sexual man in today's society.

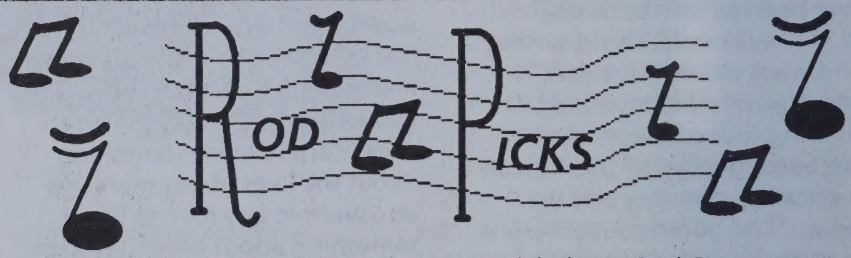
The book was purposely written to appeal to a larger audience, unlike the exceptional books written by other black gay men over the past ten years. The author wanted straight African-Americans to learn something about the lives of gay men. He also wanted gay men to learn something about other gay men and how we sometimes treat each other.

The book is available at Oxford Book Store, The Shrine of the Black Madonna Bookstore, and Third World Book Store. You may also order through the mail by sending a check for $15.95 plus postage and handling payable to The Consortium Press, 1447 Peachtree Street, Suite 1011, Atlanta, Georgia 30309, or call 1-800-523-4520. ■

ENTERTAINMENT

FRIENDS TO FRIENDS

■ With April comes Springtime and the **Easter Bunny** bringing lots of events throughout the month. • Starting on Sat., Apr. 4, a **Tri-Unity Dance** (hosted by Les Femme Elegante, Hospitality Atlanta & Friends) at **Texas**. • This Easter the sisters of **Hospitality Atlanta** are having an **Eater Egg Hunt** at **Texas** on Sat., Apr. 18. • **Homegirls** presents ***Hats*** at **Visions** on Fri., Apr 17 and a picnic at **Sweetwater Park** on Easter Sunday. • Spring fever gets hotter every Friday with **Friends Erotic Fridays** at **TRAXX**. • As always there's **TRAXX** Sat. night dance magic and a special **Easter Sunday Party**. • **Jomandi** presents ***Today*** at the **14th St. Playhouse**. • Be sure to catch **Les Chanteuses Africanes** with **Alicia Banks, WRFG 89.3**, Sundays at 1am. • The **AESM** has a special benefit coming to **TRAXX** May 27. **Happy Birthday** notes to sisters **Judith H.** and **Charlotte** of Hospitality, also brother **Rod C.** of **Loretta's.** Also **Happy Birthday boss**. Remember, there's always something to do and someplace to go. .... TJ



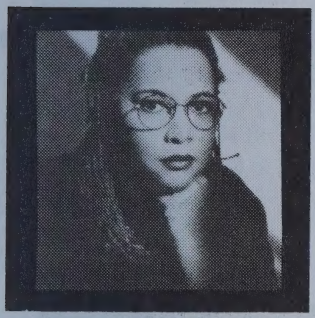
This month's ***HOT*** music picks by DJ Rod C

Title	Artist	Label
Workout	Frankie Knuckle	Virgin
Remember The Time	Michael Jackson	Epic
Love You All My Lifetime	Chaka Kahn	Warner Bros
Your Love Is Taking Me Over	SK Project	Maxie
Lift Every Voice	Mass Order	Columbia
Sindae	Hard House	Strickly Rhythm
Chic Mystic	Chic	Warner Bros
This Will Be Mine (EP)	SAX	Freeze
Closer	Mister Fingers	MCA
Make It Happen	Mariah Carey	Columbia

Rod C was awarded a gold album for support and promotion of Crystal Waters's single *Gypsy Woman* on Mercury Records.

ENTERTAINMENT

BLACK FILMMAKERS



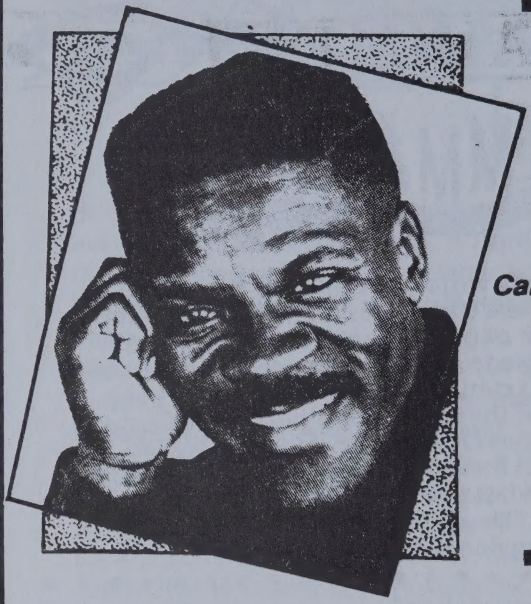
Julie Dash, writer, director and producer of "Daughters Of The Dust" says the film is about "the fear of going away from home and not being able to come back,the fear of abandoning one's culture." Set in the legendary Sea Islands of the South at the turn of the Century, "Daughters Of The Dust" follows a Gullah family on the eve of its migration to the North. Honored last year at the Sundance Film Festival, "Daughters" is now playing at the Screening Room in Atlanta.

Issac Julien's latest film, "Young Soul Rebels" is a mystery thriller set in 1977 London. It is about two black teenagers, one gay and one straight. The film is a murder mystery, but it also delves into the romantic interest of both teenagers and the counter cultures that existed during that period.

Julien, who is proudly black and gay wrote the acclaimed "Looking For Langston" that has been a hit at most gay film festivals. "Young Soul Rebel can be viewed at a special showing Friday, April 10th at Centervision, 729-8487.

Michele Parkerson is an African American lesbian writer and independent director/producer based in Washington, DC She was an honoree in the Miller Brewing Company's 1991 Gallery of Greats Collection on black filmmakers. Her documentary films and videos highlight the diversity and contemporary histories of African American women. Two of her documentaries have aired on PBS: the film "But Then, She's Betty Carter (1980), screened at several festivals including FILMEX and the Berlin Film Festival, and the video documentary "Gotta Make This Journey: Sweet Honey In The Rock". "Journey" won a Blue Ribbon in the 1984 American Film Festival.

Ms. Parkerson has served on the faculties of Howard University, Temple University and the University of Delaware. Among her works-in-progress are the "The Audre Lorde Film Project", a profile of the black lesbian poet/activist and cancer survivor.



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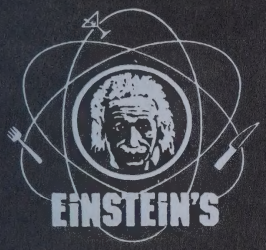

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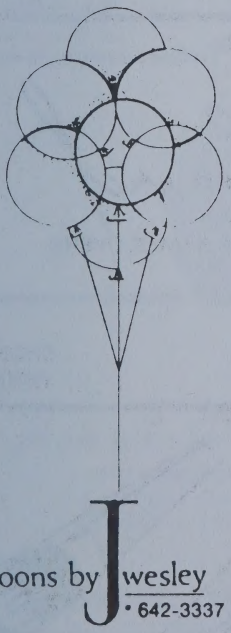

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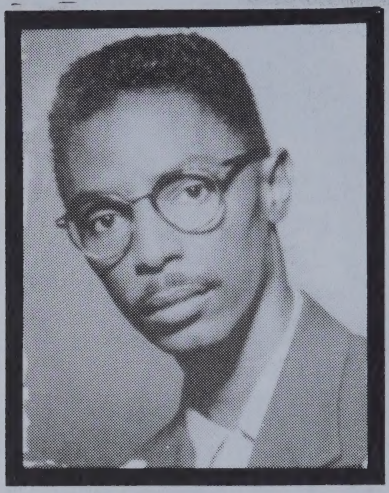

Skin maintenance is a must! Plan in you budget to have at least two facials a month. Adhere to a daily skincare regiment at home morning and night. Regular facials and daily cleansing will benefit your face tremendously.

The look for day – bare as you dare. Nude lipcolor, matte foundation, a fluff of blush of the same shade as lipcolor on eyelids and cheeks, if desired. Very little eyeliner.

The look for evening – beat your face. Dark eyes, exaggerated eyebrows, false eyelashes, matte lipcolors and foundations. The look for men – matte foundation or translucent powder. Brown or grey eyeliner in the day. Black eyeliner in the evening or for photos. Light to dark brown lipliner. Keep facial hairs neatly groomed always.

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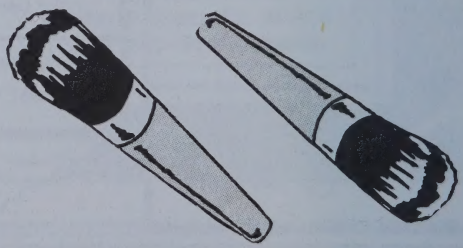

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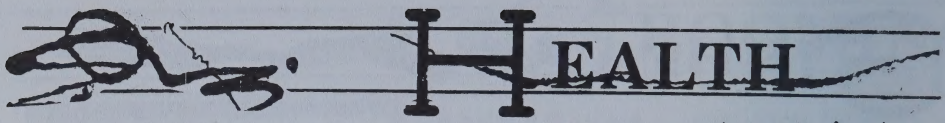

The AIDS Educational Services for Minorities (AESM) was founded in December 1990 by Rudolph Carn, Mae Reed and the late Edna Brown because of our concerns for the lack of AIDS education in the minority community. AESM's mission is to make health services avail-able for people of color with early/ advanced stages of HIV infection, and to educate communities of color on the facts about AIDS.

It is one of Atlanta's first com--munity based AIDS organizations established and managed by people of color to deal with the entire spectrum of AIDS. The primary focus of AESM's services and outreach is to the minority communities of metropolitan Atlanta.

A profile of clients depicts a population with many needs. AESM's services will include case management, in- home nursing care, housing referrals, psycho-social support, rent and utilities, home nursing care, food, transportation, education, and primary prevention.

AIDS Educational Services for Minorities hopefully will become a leader in AIDS education and services in the minority communities of metropolitan Atlanta. AESM's founding members and board are driven by the love and concern for our brothers and sisters with the motto, "We love you, love yourself, BE SAFE. . "

AIDS EDUCATION/SERVICES FOR MINORITIES (AESM)

"We Love You, Love Yourself, Be Safe"

Rudolph H. Carn
CEO/Founder

P. O. Box 87277
Atlanta, Georgia 30337
(404) 762-6002

JUST MY OPINION

Dear Son:
I want to *come out* to you about some changes in my life. First, to *come out* to someone is to make public the issue of one's sexuality. It means that one is no longer willing to live in the shadows, or in the closet regarding one's identity. Simply stated I have adapted to a lesbian life style. Actually the words adapted and lifestyle are inappropriate here, but i'll use them to convey the situation to you. I'm choosing to have partners in my life who are women instead of men.

Adapted is incorrect. I've always been attracted to women or girls in the same way that males and females are attracted to one another since the age of eight. It was just there for me. It was at a later age that I learned that lesbians or homosexuals were frowned upon by our culture.

At the age of 15, I concluded that the voice of the culture was right and I and my feelings were wrong. Those many years ago, I didn't know that I could have expressed myself just as I was. So I gave in to the pressures of a homophobic society. I submerged that part of myself and played the role of the girl. I got a boyfriend. I even married. The tragedy for me was that I was unsupported in expressing what nature or God had placed in me. This suppression has caused much pain and suffering. In the midst of it all, I am glad to have had my children. Each of you has enriched my life, helped me to grow stronger, to bend and experience joy in my living.

It is from women that I have learned all that I know. How to love, how to fight, how to survive, how to heal. I love the black family; the women and the men. In general, relations between men and women are hamstrung because of stereotypical roles that we superimpose upon our humanity. We die to the roles and cease to exist as humans with feelings and aspirations. The message is love and be your self...freedom.

As I explained to your sisters, I only married because I didn't know what else to do. It was all that I witnessed around me. Even though it wasn't working well for most people, it was the norm. I don't want for any of you to find yourselves, in your young formative lives, feeling lost, unable to identify with your surroundings, or feeling overwhelmed by the pressures of becoming a whole person. Nor to decide to choose something that looks easy or safe because so many others are choosing it. I want for all of my children to find the broadest avenue of self expression and joy. The choices I make for myself may not be for you. They certainly are not for everyone. I am the same person I've always been. I am a lot happier. I share my identify where I can, and I find acceptance in our family and among friends. They recog-nize that it is who I am inside that matters most.
I hope that you will have questions to ask of me. Please do so. I love you as always. ..Mommy

ORGANIZATIONS/SERVICES

African-American Lesbian/Gay Alliance (AALGA)
A political and social organization for black lesbians and gay men. Meets 1st Sunday of each month, 4 pm, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ashby & Abernathy Sts., Atlanta, GA – (404) 349-3739

Atlanta Buyer's Club
Access to alternative treatment for the HIV community – P.O. Box 77003, Atlanta, GA 30357 – (404) 874-4845

BWMT
P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA, 30301 – (404) 892-BWMT

Coming Full Circle
African American Lesbian/Gay Network – (404) 624-1799

Hospitality Atlanta – P.O. Box 55410, Atlanta, GA 30308

Homegirls
P.O. Box 18034, Atlanta, GA 30316 – (404) 662-9101

Human Rights Campaign Fund
Nation's largest lesbian & gay political & lobbying organization. – (404) 373-6330

Party Network – (404) 879-5425

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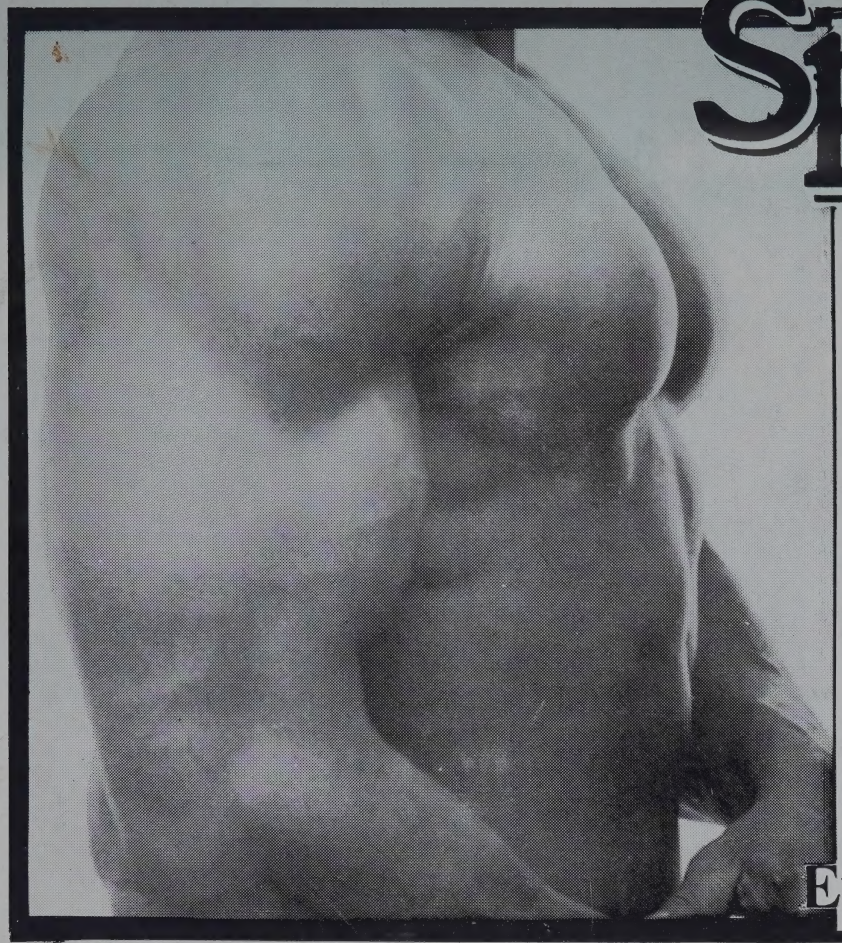
19 3rd Sunday Workshop Series Presents "RELATIONSHIPS" NEXT MONTH	20 *Happy Birthday!! Charlotte Shaw*	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 8:30 PM Express Lanes	29	30		



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Contributing Writers

Patrick Bell
Gloria McCrary

New National Black Gay Publication

Friends would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new monthly publication. Each month we will provide you with information that we hope will be both entertaining and informative.

Friends publication evolved to provide some unification for our constantly expanding community, and to enable us to share current information on entertainment, events, bars, organizations, fashion, grooming, health, business, and news pertaining to the Black gay community. We are hoping this magazine will serve as a means for us to network on a national level.

Friends is distributed FREE monthly through participating bars, organizations and businesses. *Friends* will be mailed directly to your home for the low subscription rates:

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COVER

Sharon Redd
See cover story, p. 12.

Vol. 1 • No. 6
June 1992

PRIDE CHECK LIST

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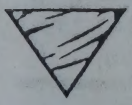

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NEWS

1992 Business Expo

When lesbians and gays purchase goods and services from within our community, we empower all of our sisters and brothers. However, finding those businesses, talking to, and getting to know the owners is often hard work. The annual Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Business Expo is a place where you can find those businesses, purchase goods and services and meet the owners and employees who make the Expo happen! The Expo is one of the featured events of PRIDE. With nearly a hundred booths being readied for the event, organizers expect a tremendous turnout. Door prizes, provided by many of the retailers and service providers,will be given throughout the day. In addition, a series of open workshops will be held beginning at 11:30 am.

"Putting together a community event of this magnitude takes the efforts of many,many people," commented Annie Archbold, 1992 Expo Director. It takes individuals like Sam Bostick of AALGA, Don Weston of LazerAge, Michael Phillips of Maddix and Mimi Pfiel to commit their time and energy beyond the business day to make it happen."

The Business Expo will be held on June 13 at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel from 10 am to 5 pm. Admission is $5 per person. For more information, call the Business Expo hotline at 662-4599.

Run For Pride '92

Front Runners Atlanta will sponsor their second annual Lesbian and Gay Pride 5K Run/Walk Saturday, June 27, Grant Park, 8 am. Race registration is $10 postmarked before June 13 and $12 thereafter. Race day registration will be held from 7 am to 7:45. The race will start at the Boulevard entrance to the Park. All proceeds will benefit Project Open Hand/Atlanta. For more information call (404) 621-5007.

The Gay & Lesbian Public Safety Task Force meets every 3rd Tuesday at City Hall, 55 Trinity St., (404) 330-6504.

U.N.I.T.E. Conference

The organizers of the U.N.I.T.E. (Unity and Networking Ideas and Individuals Through Teaching and Entertainment) conference for the African American community are seeking artists, entertainers, and vendors interested in participating in the Aug. 8 event. Contact AALGA, 239-8184 or Friends, 621-5078.

TRAXX Closing

After May 30 TRAXX will no longer be open. It will close for remodeling and open with a new format sometime in July. It will be a great loss in our community.

NEWS

Atlanta Pride

Atlanta's first Lesbian and Gay Pride celebration took place in 1970, the first anniversary of the Stonewall uprising (Greenwich Village, New York City). In June, 1991, Atlanta gay men and lesbians celebrated Lesbian and Gay Pride over two weekends. More than 20,000 people marched down Peachtree on Sunday, June 23 to commemorate the twenty-first anniversary of Stonewall.

The theme of Pride '92 is Take Pride: Celebrate Your Individuality. Through the emphasis on our individuality, Pride '92 articulates the strength of the Atlanta community, a result of our willingness to embrace cultural diversities in our common struggle. As part of a Southeastern center of urban growth, the Atlanta gay and lesbian community represents a broad cultural base varied in racial background and diverse in ability, age, spiritual beliefs, and situation. We believe that the respect with which we treat ourselves and each other will eventually be reflected in the respect with which we are treated by the larger communities in which we live.

Scheduled Events

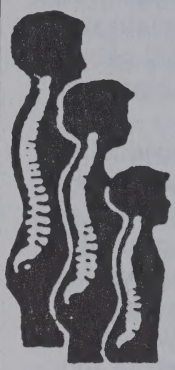
6/27 21st Family Reunion/Saturday in the Park (Piedmont Park)
Sports exhibition/competition - begins in the morning
Artist market - 10 am until 9 pm
Picnic and entertainment - afternoon
Commitment ceremony - late afternoon
Candle light march and vigil - evening
A march from Piedmont Park to John Howell Park in memory of those who have died from AIDS or as victims of hate crimes.

6/28 Lesbian and Gay Pride Day
Parade – line up-11 am step off-noon
Assemble at Atlanta Civic Center
Route - Ralph McGill St., Peachtree St., 10th St., to Piedmont Park.
Rally/entertainment - 1:30 pm
Artist Market - 1:30 pm until 9 pm

For more information on events and how to volunteer, call (404) 662-4533. Regularly scheduled Pride meetings are held the first Monday and third Thursday of each month at 7 pm.

Interfaith Celebration

An Interfaith Celebration of Lesbian and Gay Pride will be held at the Catholic Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on Tuesday evening, June 23, as part of Atlanta's Lesbian and Gay Pride activities for 1992. The Interfaith Celebration will begin at 7:30 pm. The Shrine is located at 48 M.L.K. Jr. Dr. in downtown Atlanta. For more information call (404) 320-6610



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Saturday, June 13

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Expo Hotline:
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SPOTLIGHT ON HOSPITALITY ATLANTA

"The key to success in any venture is to make your customers feel extra special," says Charlene Cothran, co-founder of the Atlanta based African-American lesbian entertainment company.

Partners Charlotte Shaw, Jocelyn Lyles, and Cothran formed the partnership nearly a year ago. "We all worked together on the hospitality committee of the National Lesbian Conference along with several other beautiful sisters. Everyone was so resourceful! The excitement and momentum generated during those few months of fund raising and preparation was wonderful! We just couldn't let it whiter away." After the committee dissolved the three women decided to add the name of Atlanta to their own blend of southern hospitality and they've been on the move every since.

"It's not always easy," Jocelyn admits, "to work together. Generally, our personalities and lifestyles are pretty diverse. However, it wasn't long before the three of us recognized the quality and strength of our bond." "We have unity as well as diversity," adds Charlotte. "Jocelyn's cool and even temperament provides the perfect balance between endless creativity and sound financial guidance. We can always work it out."

Most of all, the women attribute their success to the warmth and support of the women of color in Atlanta. Charlene explains "women love to come together for a good time and we'll always provide a space for that, but I think that the best business decision that we've made lately was to get out of the way and let the desires of our supporters guide us."

That decision has led Hospitality Atlanta to an eight team bowling league . The Hospitality softball team plays in a city league at Southside Sports Complex.

The 3rd Sunday Workshop Series got off to an exciting start! The session was well attended by singles and couples from the metro area. The workshop facilitator was noted Atlanta psychologist Marlene Johnson.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

The Triangle Supper Club will open on June 13 at Frederick's Jazz Bar and Grill downtown. Aimed at the more mature women, the supper club will offer live enter-tainment by one of Atlanta's hottest jazz bands. Feast on hot hors d'orveres and witness an elegant lingerie fashion show. Then dance to the sounds we love to remember! Marvin, Aretha, the O jays and Nancy to name a few. Sound like fun? Tickets are already on sale. Admission is $7.00. Call 627-0520 for additional information.

The Anniversary Party will take place at Texas Restaurant, Sat., June 20. D.J. SURPRISE" will rock the house downstairs while the bid whist experts rock the tables upstairs!

The future definitely looks bright for Hospitality Atlanta.

ANOTHER LOVE

by Patrick Bell

It's a humid, spring afternoon. I'm sitting on the top bleacher at a city league baseball game. I'm surrounded by about fifty cheerleading parents. The Reds vs. the Angels. It's the bottom of the fourth inning and the score is tied at 3 runs. Sitting next to me is another cheerleading parent, he's Leon Kellum, the father of Angel's short stop, Leo.

"I've told Leo to always be on the front of his feet, knees bent and concentrating on the ball. You never know when it's gonna take a funny hop on ths soft dirt and grass." Leon whispers to me, never taking his eyes off his son. I would come to realize later he was making mental notes as he recounted almost every play in detail after the game. The Angels won 4 to 3.

Leon is proud of Leo's accomplishments as a baseball player and is equally as proud of his son's adjustment to his new home. Leon and Leo moved to Atlanta about 14 months ago from Houston, Texas.

In Houston, Leo lived with his paternal grandparents. When his father learned that his job was transferring him to Atlanta, he asked Leo to come with him. "I couldn't handle being so far away from him. Even though he was living with my mom and dad, I was with him daily. Moving to Atlanta would have made it impossible for me to be with my son every day.." Leon admits to being surprised by his son's eagerness to move to Atlanta with him. He adds, "...if he had wanted to remain in Houston with his grandparents and friends, I wouldn't have forced him to come with me. He has been well taken care of and if I thought for one second that I would not have been able to provide a good, stable home for him he would be in Houston now."

Leon admits that being a single parent does have its negatives. He feels Leo doesn't get as much attention from him as he did with his parents, who are both retired now. But Leo thinks differently, "I like being from under Nana's constant watch. I'm almost 13 and like a little freedom...I'm not a baby anymore,' he says with a big smile that matches his father's.

Leo and Leon have many strikingly similar features. Both are tall and slender. Leo's shoulders are beginning to broaden, like his dad's. and they both have beautifully smooth mocha colored skin, reflecting their dual Native and Arican-American heritages.

Leo (Leonard, Jr.) was born out of wedlock when both his parents were 18. His mother did not want the responsi-

bility of a child and Leon was not financially or emotionally able to take care of him. Leon's parents assumed responsibility for his young son. Leon and Leo both lived with his parents while he attended college and graduate school.

After graduate school, Leon moved in with someone he calls his "first real love," Chris. Leon never told anyone about his gayness before this relationship. Soon after the relationship began, Leon and Chris moved less than twenty minutes away from his parents. He confided in his parents, whom he had always been close to, about his life. It was decided that Leo would remain with his parents.

Leon recalls, with laughter, how his parents reacted to his gayness, "...my mother cried for 3 days, non-stop. My father clinched his fist, locked his jaws and didn't speak to me for almost a year. Can you imagine what it's like for your own father to not acknowledge your presence? It was tough, but what I did was necessary for my own mental survival. I was tired of hiding ..(I wanted to) be honest with those who meant the most to me; my parents and my son.

Wiping away a small tear, Leon told me how he and his father eventually mended their relationship, "...one day he was working out in the yard, Chris and I had come to take Leo to the movies...I simply went over to him, put my arms around him...put my head on his shoulder and held tighter than ever before. After a few seconds, he dropped his tools and hugged me back. It was a wonderful feeling to have my father back.

If you have come to the conclusion that this is a special man then you are correct. The relationship with his son is typical of many straight parents have with their children. Leo is an ordinary teenage who giggles and talks a lot, listens to loud (rap) music, hates to clean his room, and would rather talk on the phone, play video games and hang out with his friends, than do his homework. His father surrounds him with a close knit group of friends (both straight and gay) who also have children. Leo and his friends are very active in church and other civic activities. His father says, "I try to keep him busy. A bored teenager is a problem waiting to happen."

Leon Kellum admits that rearing a black man child alone is difficult and very hard work. He offers his son the same values and principles of life his parents gave him: honesty, faith, a good work ethic and unconditional understanding.

Certainly Leon and Leo are not the "traditional" family, but they are indeed a "family" in the truest sense of the word. They share a common bond as father and son; they've grown into a mutual respect for one another as friends; and most of all, they personify that basic human emotion, on which their new life together is built, called love. ■

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF SHARON REDD

by Gloria McCrary

Sharon Redd was born into a musical family and while growing up in Norfolk, Va. music was a constant in her life.

She began performing at an early age in the church choir and school talent shows. her major break came as the winner (over 1,500 contestants) in the Shaffer Beer Contest, which led to performances with stars such as Lou Rawls and Patti LaBelle.

Sharon's next stop was singing and dancing lead in the the Australian production of Hair and a 2 1/2 yr. tour there which included her own TV show. Following this she hit the London stage, co-starring with Tommy Lee Jones, Madge Sinclair and Nell Carter in *The Wedding of Iphgenia*.

It was in 1980, after five fabulous years with Bette Midler, as one of the Harlettes, that Sharon soared into a solo career. She released on Predule Records a number of disco classics including "In The Name of Love," "Beat The Street," and "Can You Handle It" which Sharon recently re-recorded with DNA and is now a top 20 hit in Europe. Sharon's most recent recording was a cut with her sister, Pennye Ford, on Pennye's album which is to be released in Aug.

I met Sharon in 1981 during the height of her solo career. Disco was the rage and she was one of the hottest acts around. Sharon agreed to work with my company to bring her show to the black gay and lesbian community.

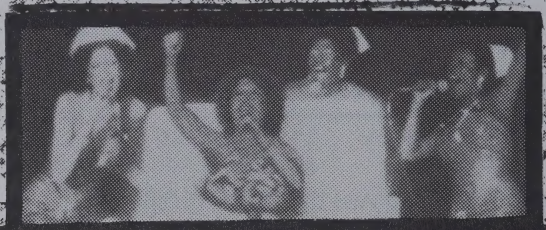
It was the first time in Atlanta that a major artist had considered this particular market. We did many other shows together in the years that followed, but I'll always remember that first one and her warmth, kindness and generousity.

She possessed a special quality that was felt by everyone who came in contact with her. I know her spirit will live on through the gifts of love and music she left us.

I'm proud to say that Sharon Redd was my friend.

In preparing this feature I was able to speak with many of Sharon's fans, friends, and family and realized, even more so, the magnitude of this woman who touched so many lives in such a profound way. On the following pages we will share some of their memories of Sharon.

Note: *Special thanks to all those who took time out of their busy schedules to help me prepare this feature: Bette Midler, Charlotte Crossley, Ula Hedwig, Ruth Carson, Pennys Ford, Micheal Alsondo, Katie Perry, Rudy Calvo, Lorna Warden.*



THE

SHARO

October 19, 1

I became familiar with Sharon in the 70's through her reputation as a session singer. She went out on tour with me, as one of the Harlettes, in the "Clams On The Half Shell" show in 1976. She remained one of the Harlettes for a number of years. I remember Sharon's tremendous spirit and beautiful, versatile voice. I was in awe of her talent and her spirit and I hope she's at peace. I love her very much.

Bette Midler

SHARON REDD

The one thing I'll really r
voice like an angel. I kno

I remember Sharon was
and howgood the chemist
also did a great Dinah Sh

Photo: Courtesy of Calvin collection

I was always so proud of you, my special little star. Even in this darkness you still shine brightly.

Lorna Warden
Best Friend

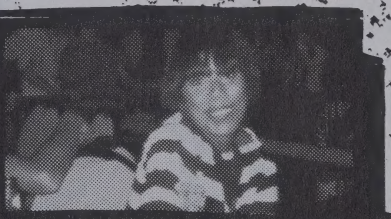
ONE R

N REDD

April 30, 1992

What I loved most about Sharon was that she was non judgemental. I miss her.

Pennye Ford
Sister - Former Member of Snap
(Photo - Courtesy of Calvo collection)



In her later years, Sharon became a spiritual giant and she's shared that with everyone. I love her and I'll miss her very much.

Ruth Carson
Friend - Former Manager

s her beautiful voice. She had a t she's with the Lord.

Charlotte Crossley
Friend - Former Harlette

unny and personable on stage. is between the three of us. She mpersonation. I'll miss her.

Ula Hedwig
Friend - Former Harlette

Sharon's friendship and encouragement re directed my life. I'll always love her.

Michael Alsondo
Friend - Personal Assistant

Leonard Roberson
&

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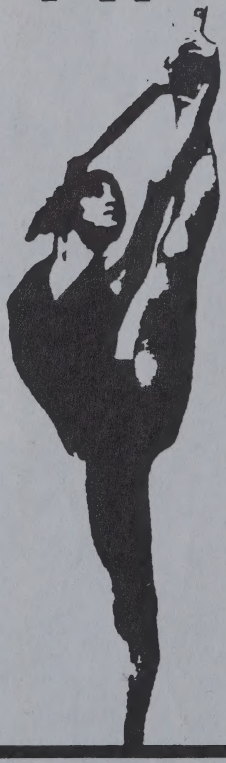

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ENTERTAINMENT

FRIENDS TO FRIENDS

■ It's the end of an era...May 30 was the last night of business for **TRAXX**. **Friends** will move our **Erotic Fridays** to **Goodies** starting Fri., June 5. • **Hospitality Atlanta** will present the **Triangle Supper Club**, June 13 at **Fredericks**. And don't miss their **Anniversary Party**, June 20 at **Texas**. • **Party Network** is at a new location, **Seafood China** on Sat., June 6. • Friends will be the sponsor of **Les Chanteus Africans** on **WRFG** every Sunday morning, 1:00 am. • Finally, **Ce Ce Peniston** will be in town coutesy of **Hampton Entertainment**, Thurs., June 11 at **Pearls**. • Don't Forget! **Gotta Dance Co** performance July 25 at **14th st Playhouse**. • **Alice Walker** at **Charis** in July. • **AALGA & Friends Afro-Am Gay & Lesbian Conference**, Aug. 8. • Friends to Friend, there's always something to do. Someplace to go .... TJ

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Live Without Music	Keys & Tronics
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For You	Fouth Measure Man
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Keep On Walking	Ce Ce Peniston

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ENTERTAINMENT

CE CE PENNISTON

With the success of "FINALLY," Ce Ce Peniston is poised to become a major R&B/ pop sensation. Her newfound stardom is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. "It's overwhelming!" Ce Ce smiles. "I knew that, through my perserverence and wanting to succeed, one day I would have something that would make me very happy, such as a hit record. I just never knew it would happen this quickly!"

It was hip hop/dance record producer Felipe Delgado who put Ce Ce on the road to the big time. Delgado invited Ce Ce to do some background work on the current A&M Records album by rising female rapper Overweight Pooch. The A&R staff at A&M was so knocked out by Ce Ce's vocals that they offered her a record deal. Before she knew it, Ce Ce was in the studio recording "FINALLY."

Ce Ce Peniston is "finally" displaying her talents the way she had always dreamed she would her first single is exploding big time and this is ony the beginning. . .

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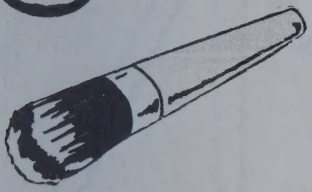

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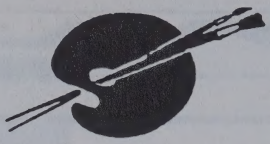

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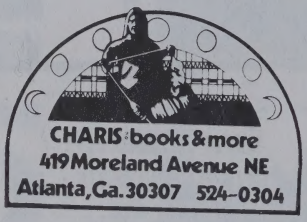

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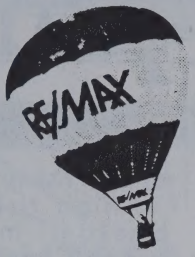

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Hepatitis-B / HIV Connection

The organ of the body most prone to attack by the Hepatitis-B virus is the liver. The virus may have a short or long incubation period, when the carrier feels and looks healthy. Eventually, the virus attacks and makes the carrier extremely ill.

Signs and symptoms of this disease include anorexia, malaise (extreme tiredness), nausea and vomiting, fever, and jaundice (profound yellowing of the skin). If medical attention is not sought quickly, the virus may do irreversible damage to the liver that leads to chronic (long term) liver disease, cirrhosis, and/or liver cancer. And yes, Hepatitis-B can kill.

The virus is strong; sometimes surviving for more than seven days in dried blood. It has also been found in other body fluids such as semen, vaginal fluid, saliva, urine and sweat. The virus is transmitted through accidental needle sticks, the sharing of I.V. needles and sexual contact. It can also enter the body through an opening in the skin or through the eyes and mouth.

The disease has long plagued the gay community. In the mid seventies, Hepatitis-B infections sky rocketed among gay men.

Signs and symptoms of Hepatitis-B infections are similar to HIV infection. Both diseases are caused by naturally occurring viruses and are transferred from one person to another in much the same way. AIDS researchers believe there is a direct connection between the two diseases. They believe one exposure coexists with the other in persons of high risk groups.

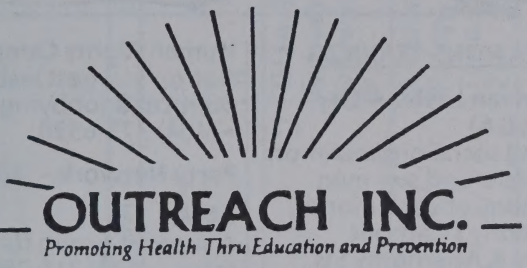
High risk groups include: bisexual men, promiscuous straights, persons who repeatedly contract STD's (sexually transmitted diseases) and female prostitutes. Lesbians are not considered a high risk group. However, women who are exclusively lesbian or bisexual are urged to practice safer sex with all partners.

Everyone, especially our lesbigay community, are encouraged to decrease or limit the number of sexual partners and consistently use "rubbers" (latex only) and dental dams (for women - also latex) in oral, anal, and/or vaginal intercourse. The sharing of sex toys (dildos, vibrators, etc.) and I.V. needles should not be done.

Hepatitis-B and the HIV viruses are similar in the transmission and incubation period; they both attack the body's delicate immune system. The viruses are found to co-exist in the same patient and both can be limited in their exposure by consistently practicing safer sex and protecting broken skin from blood, semen and vaginal fluids.

Unlike HIV, there is a vaccination against Hepatitis-B. It is not made of blood by-products. Therefore, one cannot contract HIV from the vaccine. One can protect his/herself against this infection (ten times more so than HIV) disease. Those of us in the high risk groups are urged to be vaccinated at one of the county public health facilities.

This article was reprinted with permission from Crossroads, Newsletter of the African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance



Stopping AIDS in Atlanta's African-American community and caring for our brothers and sisters with HIV.

- ***LATEX LOVERS*** - a safer sex HIV prevention program for Black Gay Men.
- Free, anonymous HIV testing and counseling. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4 - 8 p.m., Saturdays, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Substance abuse counseling, referral, and help in getting into drug/alcohol treatment
- Support groups for HIV+ people. Mondays and Thursdays, 5 - 7 p.m.
- Narcotics Anonymous meetings with special HIV focus. Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
- Help in the Grady Hospital system: AIDS Clinic. OB/GYN and inpatient floors.

(404) 346-3922, or 1-800-441-AIDS

ORGANIZATIONS/SERVICES

African-American Lesbian/Gay Alliance (AALGA)
A political and social organization for black lesbians and gay men. Meets 1st Sunday of each month, 4 pm, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ashby & Abernathy Sts., Atlanta, GA – (404) 349-3739

Atlanta Buyer's Club
Access to alternative treatment for the HIV community – P.O. Box 77003, Atlanta, GA 30357 – (404) 874-4845

BWMT
P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA, 30301 – (404) 892-BWMT

Coming Full Circle
African American Lesbian/Gay Network – (404) 624-1799

Hospitality Atlanta – A social organization providing entertainment for women of color P.O. Box 55410, Atlanta, GA 30308

Homegirls
P.O. Box 18034, Atlanta, GA 30316 – (404) 662-0105

Human Rights Campaign Fund
Nation's largest lesbian & gay political & lobbying organization. – (404) 373-6330

Party Network – (404) 879-5425

ZAMI
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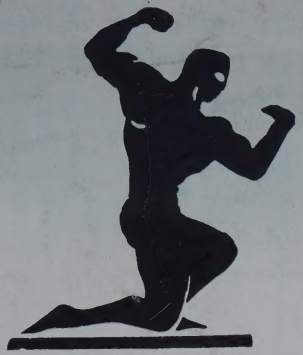
MANY THANKS TO OUR GUESTS, SUPPORT STAFF, SECURITY OFFICERS, AND FRIENDS FOR MAKING THIS 1ST YEAR A GREAT ONE!

JUNE 1992

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THUR.	FRI.	SAT.
	1	**BOWLING** 2	3	4	5	6
Any Ole Sunday Workshop Series 7 presents a	Hospitality Softball Team 8 'The Divas' vs. TKO 8:40 pm	**LEAGUE** 9	10	11	12	**Triangle Supper Club @Frederick's** 13
'Sister to Sister' Reading 14 next month.	15 Support the team each Monday nite at the Southside Sports Complex	**SEMIFINALS** 16	17	18	19	**Anniversary Party @ Texas** 20
Women writers are invited to 21 participate.	22	**Express Lanes each Tues.** 23 **8:30 pm**	24	25	26	27
28	29	'Spare Parts' 1st place 30 to date				



Friends

Friends announces its new location!

Erotic Fridays moves to Goodies Food & Spirits, 64 Third Street

Join us every Friday for the same fun and good times!
The patio is all the rave at **Goodies**! The fun will continue!

Friends

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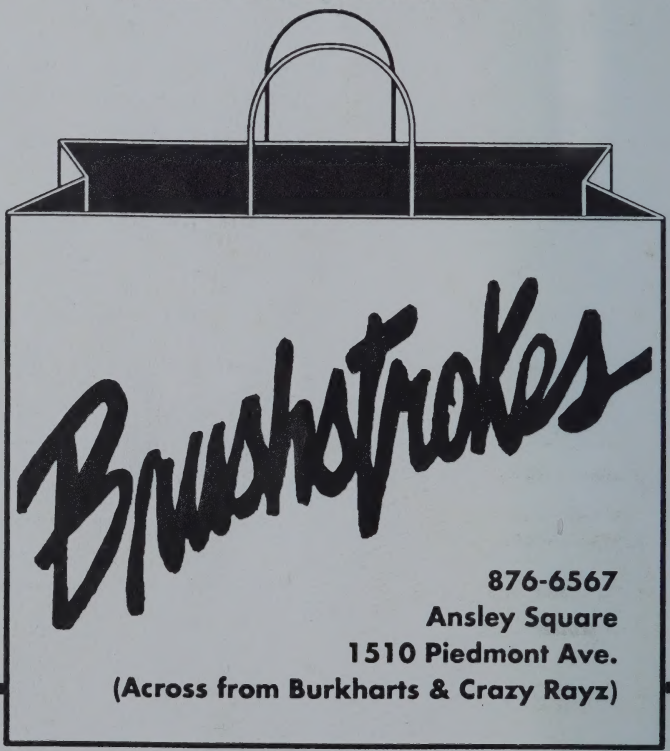

876-6567
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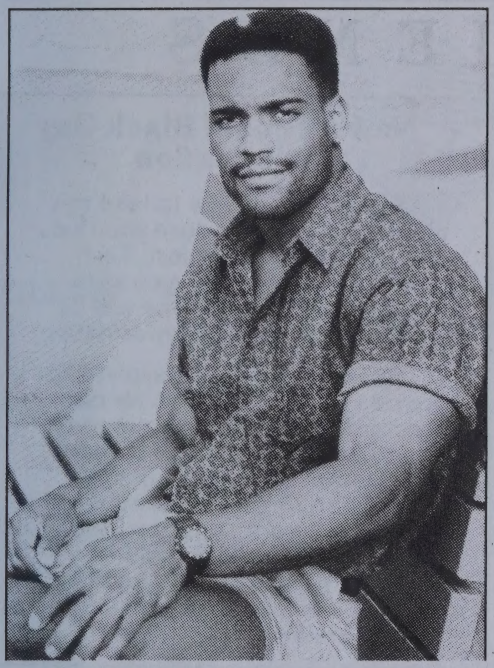
(Across from Burkharts & Crazy Rayz)



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T. J. Mount

Contributing Writers
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Patrick Bell
Dallas Collier
Anthony Williams
Ricky Wilson

New National Black Gay Publication

Friends would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new monthly publication. Each month we will provide you with information that we hope will be both entertaining and informative.

Friends publication evolved to provide some unification for our constantly expanding community, and to enable us to share current information on entertainment, events, bars, organizations, fashion, grooming, health, business, and news pertaining to the Black gay community. We are hoping this magazine will serve as a means for us to network on a national level.

Friends is distributed FREE monthly through participating bars, organizations and businesses. *Friends* will be mailed directly to your home for the low subscription rates:

6 months ... $10.00
12 months ... $20.00

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COVER

Marjorie Hill

See cover story, p. 12

Vol. 1 • No. 10
Oct. 1992

"FRIENDS" PROFESSIONAL BLACK GAY & LESBIAN BUSINESS NETWORK

"Friends" Invites You To Participate In
Our Professional Black Gay & Lesbian Network
Which Will Be Held Friday, October 9, 1992,
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NEWS

POSITIVE LIVING

A new HIV/AIDS community weekly, 1/2 hour TV forum will premiere on Cable 12, People TV on Sept. 16, at 1:30pm and again on Sat., Sept 19 at 10:00pm. This show is a community TV resource for the HIV/AIDS community of Atlanta, their loved ones, families and care providers. It enjoys the support and participation of the following AIDS service Organizations;

Nat. Asoc. of People with AIDS/Atlanta
Outreach, Inc.
Project Open Hand
1st MCC Aids Ministry
From All Walks of Life
AID Atlanta
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PWPS

and numerous individuals from the HIV/AIDS community without whose participation and efforts this show would not be possible. North Dekalb cable will air "Positive Living", Channel 20, 10:00 pm. Saturdays. For further information please contact Leif Eric Spivey, (404) 523-0449.

DONOR INSEMINATION AND YOU

If you want to have a child, but your husband or partner is not fertile; or you are a single heterosexual without a male partner; or you are a lesbian, with or without a partner (and maybe you are over the age of 35 and concerned about your "biological clock"...); donor insemination at the Feminist Women's Health Center may be right for you.

The Feminist Women's Health Center has always supported women's reproductive choices, and our unique donor insemination program has grown to meet the needs of our clients, who come to us from several southeastern states. We are proud to be able to offer all women, regardless of marital status or sexual preference, the opportunity to conceive a child in a supportive, caring atmosphere. Feminist Women's Health Center, 580 14th St., NW, Atlanta, GA 30318, (404) 874-7551 or 1-800-877-6013.

IMAGE FILM/VIDEO CENTER

IMAGE Film/Video Center is proud to announce the 17th Atlanta Film and Video Festival. All works must have been completed after January 1, 1990. Only independently produced films and videos are appropriate for this competition.

Work must be received in the IMAGE office by: December 18, 1992 (NOT POSTMARKED BUT RECEIVED) To receive an entry form, call or write to: IMAGE Film, Video Center, 75 Bennett St. NW Suite M-1, Atlanta, GA 30309, (404) 35204225.

NEWS

THE CENTER FOR BLACK WOMEN'S WELLNESS

The Center for Black Women's Wellness (CBWW) is a community-based program of the National Black Women's Health Project (NBWHP), a self-help and health advocacy organization committed to improving the health status of women.

The CBWW's primary purpose is to improve the quality of life for women and their families through coordinated health, social services referrals, education and occupational skills training. Self-help group development is the vehicle through which women are aided in recognizing the inter-relatedness of mental, physical, and emotional health. We recognize that women most affected by a problem and who live with it daily often carry solutions within themselves.

No one should be without the information support and services needed to be healthy. CBWW provides access to quality and affordable health care services. Well Women's Screenings are offered on Tuesday and Friday by appointment only: pap smear, infections checks (STD's), pregnancy test, urinalysis, breast examinations, vital signs (weight, blood pressure, etc..), and referral for HIV testing. Room 309, 477 Windsor Street, SW, Atlanta, GA 30312, (404) 688-9202

TAKE BACK OUR RIGHTS

On December 15, 1791 the Bill of Rights went into effect – on the 200th anniversary of that occasion, many of us still lack basic rights and other rights are being eroded with each session of the Reagan-Bush supreme court. We want a bill of rights for the dispossessed... we want vigorous protection of freedom of speech, freedom of expression and the right to privacy.

On Sunday, December 15, 1991 join the Atlanta Rights Coalition for a thought-provoking afternoon from 2-6 pm at the Friends Meeting House, 701 West Howard Street (in Decatur). Featuring: noted author Minnie Bruce Pratt, U. S. Representative John Lewis, anti-death attorney and Decatur Mayor Michael Mears, Southern Ladies Against Women (SLAW), State Representative Cynthia McKinney, Professor of Constitutional History Michael Bellesiles, DeKalb Co. Commissioner Sherry Sutton and more.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Duncan Teague

Gena Jones

"Kansas City is a beautiful, classy, sometimes racist, sometimes friendly city to live in. I love the beautiful, hard working people there." This is how Duncan Teague, Atlanta resident and community activist, describes the place he was born and reared. . . he continues "..one does not stay at home because it is home."

The eldest of two sons to Rev. and Mrs. Teague, he grew up fulfilling the traditional role of a minister's son. "I've always represented groups of people," he says. Throughout school he was a leader and organizer. He remembers distinctly the years between preschool and 1st grade as "wonderful years," then something happened.

"I've always been effeminate. The first time I walked out the door to play with the other little boys, someone noticed something different about me. But during these years, I was accepted and cared for. . . by my friends. I was someone they loved and played with but did not understand..my mannerisms were considered cute. By second grade, I began to hear"...you need to change." The messages came from everywhere. He tried to "run" for safe haven to his mother, who in turn attempted to make him into the man child he was supposed to be.

Duncan was also making a realization of his own at this time. The realization that he was just as smart as he was different. He re-counts that his intelligence was accepted and "valued." He rebelled against the "ridiculous" stereotypes of "what boys were supposed to do. He adds, "..in jr. high school, I made overt efforts to be effeminate. His rebellion was not with its consequences There were persistent rumors to do him some harm. "I was mortified. These were the same people who elected me class president, but at the same time wanted to do me harm. . . and it was because I was gay.

Duncan graduated from high school the year after Harvey Milk was murdered in San. Francisco. He arrived at college with a sense of gay consciousness.

He reveals that he had his first boyfriend the first week of college. They met at a hall dance to welcome the freshmen. "There are no words to express my feelings. . . it was so special."

---Continued on page 19---

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Sexual Orientation

Is It A Matter Of Choice Or Are We born Gay?

Anthony Williams

Brothers and sisters the question has again arisen whether or not sexual orientation is based on any anatomical factors which would suggest or support the theory that we are born gay. I happen to believe, based on my own experience in being a black gay male, that sexual orientation is caused by environmental factors and not by any anatomical differences.

This latest study released by the UCLA School of Medicine and conducted in part by Laura Allen is inconclusive. The fact that Allen had a combined study of only 193 men and women (34 being homosexual males that died of AIDS) does not offer substantial proof to support her theory. The difference in the brain size of the 34 homosexual males in comparison to the 74 heterosexual males was larger by 34 percent, therefore leading her to conclude that there is an anatomical difference in the brain size and there is. However, the one underlining factor that refutes her findings is that she neglects to mention that the 34 homosexual males had all died of AIDS.

I am currently conducting a survey in an effort to gather data that would prove once and for all whether or not sexual orientation is a learned behavior. I propose we do this. If you feel that you were born gay please write a note outlining why you feel this way.

However, if you feel that your sexual orientation was caused by environmental factors such as child abuse, lack of a male figure or the presence of a strong domineering female in your life, state that in your note.

Please send your response to P.O. Box 465, Scottdale, GA 30079. All responses are kept confidential. ■

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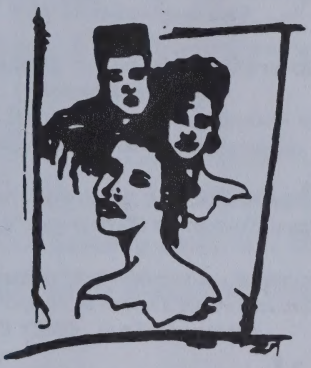

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For More Information Contact

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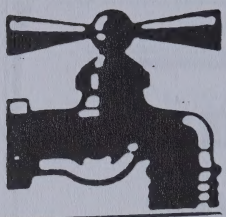

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Costumes Requested
Ticket Proceeds will Benefit HIV/AIDS education in the African American Community

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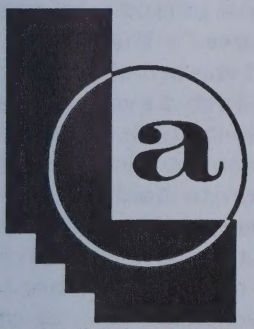

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THE

MARJ

Pat

"I absolutely believe in equal rights. I'm African-Ameri-can, a woman and a lesbian. . .I deserve the same rights as everyone else,' says Dr. Marjorie Hill. A mayoral appointee, she has served for a number of years as Director of the Mayor of New York's Office for Gay and Lesbian Community. A Ph.D. and licensed clinic psychologist, she describes herself as an "optimist" who has learned to work effectively in bureaucracy. "The community must acquaint itself on how a bureaucracy works. . . in order to better achieve their goals in getting what they want out of it."

Dr. Hill is respected and well received by her colleagues in city government. She is equally respected by her peers and fellow community organizers outside of New York City. "The position has existed without an official title for 10 years," she explains, ".. my predecessor was known as a 'point person' or person of resource." The official department was actually created during the last days of the Koch administration. Technically, Dr. Hill can be considered the first person to hold this prestigious and very visible position.

Mayor David Dinkins retained the department because he understands the value of having a liaison to the lesbian and gay community. Marjorie describes her boss as "incredible and personable . . (who) maintains an open and consistent dialogue with her department." She believes the mayor also understands that lesbian and gay civil rights issues are an integral part of his own agenda for social change.

Prior to accepting the directorship, Dr. Hill served as a resource person for the mayor's office on the community as she had been

OVER

RIE HILL

Bell

involved in several community organizations throughout New York City. On one occasion she was asked if she could recommend someone to fill the position. Her reply, "...yes, me."

"I have very clear objectives when it comes to this job," she denotes. "Address vice, violence and other public safety issues for the community; promote community empowerment; and promote multi-culturalism through curriculum and role models." Her accomplishments are admirable by any scrutinizing eye. She has organized and co-chairs the Police Council's Committee on Gay and Lesbian Issues,which consists of 25 openly homosexual individuals. She has doubled the number of bureau liaisons, who serve in a similar capacity as she does for their respected bureaus. She and Sandy, Lowe, State Liaison to Gov. Mario Cuomo, enjoy a "good working relationship." They recently convened all of the state liaisons for a meeting to share information and resources.

Dr. Hill is very conscious of acknowledging diversity as a source of strength for the community, making herself available to everyone. She has a hectic schedule which includes public appearances and speaking engagements 5 out of 7 days a week.

On the seemingly large and active black gay and lesbian community in New York, Dr. Hill comments, "..there is a solid organizing block of people of color in New York. Which gives us high visibility in New York and the rest of the country. Let me preface that by saying, there is never enough people to go around. there will always be more work to do than people." She continues, "..those who are out must understand the reasons why people are closeted and work with those issues. Those who are closeted must become more creative in ways to show their support."

There is a time when we all must give something back to the community. We have to face the challenge and accept the opportunities as they present themselves. Dr. Marjorie Hill has done just that and is paving the way for a better life for her New York community, doing so with unique style and grace.

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ENTERTAINMENT

JOMANDI

JOMANDI kicks off its 14th mainstage season with a foot stomping, heart wrenching take off on mothers and daughters and all the love and paid between them in "Jar The Floor" by award winning playwright Cheryl L. West which will be running from Oct. 9 thru Nov. 1, 1992 at the 14th Street Playhouse.

"Jar The Floor" is centered around the events that take place between five women, four generations of mothers and daughters and one visitor, when they come together for the older's 90th birthday party. Ms. West gives us four generations of black women in one family. Other than the 90 year old Ma Dear is her daughter, Lola, who still has a yen for younger men. Lola's daughter May Dee, a professor of African-American studies and her daughter, the rebellious Vennie, who is the embodiment of all their dreams. Vennie comes home with her white "girlfriend" and breaks the news that she's dropping out of college and will be leaving for Europe with her "girlfriend" to find a better life.

Recriminations abound as the ensemble case starring Elizabeth Williams Omaiami, Margo Moorer, Robin McClamb, Tracey Copeland and Lindy Wood, sling hard hitting words full of humor and pathos, provoking laughter and tears while inspiring nods of recognition as the conversations hit home.

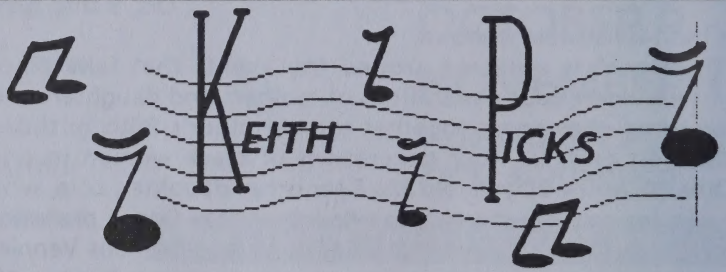
Observers of the theater scene often note that there are few good new plays and fewer by women playwrights with meaty roles for women. Add black to the equation and the numbers are even smaller. That's all the more reason to make JOMANDI'S "Jar The Floor" a must see.

Photo by Shelia Turner

ENTERTAINMENT

FRIENDS TO FRIENDS

Greeting Friends, hoping everyone has recovered from the long, event-filled Labor Day weekend. • Oct should be a very busy month also. There's **Hospitality's** events at **Texas** and their **Oct. Fest** at **Indian Springs** on Oct. 3. • **The Ritz** will be busy throughout Oct. with a variety of events planned (check their calendar in this month's issue). • **JOMANDI** opens their 14th mainstage season with the play **"Jar The Floor,"** opening Oct. 9. • **Gotta Dance Co.** will be performing at the new **Roxy** on Oct. • The **Waterworks** and **Outreach** are having a **Halloween Ball** on Oct. 31. • **Friends** will be sponsoring a **Black Gay and Lesbian Business Network.** The 1st gathering will be held Fri., Oct. 9 from 6 pm - 11 pm at the Ritz. There will be food, music, live entertainment and the opportunity to make new personal and business contacts. • Also, Friends will be presenting **Sassy Sundays "A Taste of the Good Life,"** every Sunday at the Ritz. • We'd like to say **Happy Birthday** to **Val, Don, Elaine, Shernita & Deb.** • Be on the lookout for Hospitality's **Women of Color Expo** in Nov. • Remember, there's always something to do and someplace to go.



Hot 10 records as compiled by The Ritz DJ Keith Stephens

Title	Artist
Wishing On A Start	Cover Girls
The Shelter	Gate A–
Some Lovin'	Liberty City
VooDoo Sun	Kraze/Moon Fu
Club Lonely	Lil Louis
Free Love	Juliet Roberts
Stuck In The Middle	Dannielle Gahn
Keep It Comin'	C & C Music Factory
Come On	Scram
Haven	KCC

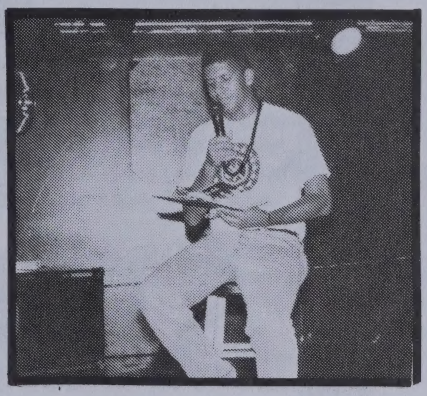
A N D STILL WE RISE

Ricky Wilson

On August 6,at 8 pm at First Metropolitan Community Church of Atlanta, about 50 people gathered to partake of the verbal feast, "And Still We Rise. . . African American Gay Poets of the 90's."

Trey started off the program by giving a stirring blues treatment in song to a poem, "His (Blues) Story," by André De Shields. He then went on to read from his original works, which included his poem, "Sister," which was selected for the semi-finals of the North American Open Poetry Contest for the National Library of Poetry. He ended his segment with a moving piece dedicated to a friend who has recently died from AIDS.

The next segment of the program was adeptly manned by Adisa, whose works have appeared in A Warm December. Adisa read pieces by Rory Buchanan, a budding writer whose life was cut short by AIDS.



Following Adisa, the three poets paid homage to Craig Harris, Donald Woods, and Rory Buchanan, writers who were in the forefront in giving voice to the black gay experience.

Last, but not least, was Alan Miller. He is an "out" English teacher who has actively promoted and organized literary events featuring black gay men for the last five years. He read from his chapbook, at the club, some of which was used in Marlon Riggs' video, "Tongues Untied."

Trey Johnson & Alan Miller also read for "Friends" Cultural Festival. From the audience's response during these two events, there is hunger for more words and images of our black gay selves, and hopefully there will be more events of this nature to feed it.

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continued from pg 6

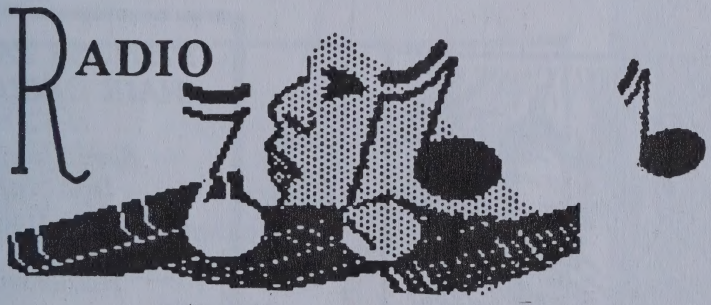
Duncan has very clear opinions on coming out. Almost ten years after his traumatic coming out to his parents he cannot talk about it without weeping.

Upon invitation from a cousin, he came to Atlanta adopting this city as his new home. He remembers with fondness the first time he attended a black a black gay bar. "...Monday Night Madness at Illusions. We arrived and the bar was packed with beautiful black people."

He eventually found his niche with the local chapter of Black and White Men Together (BWMT), having held several key leadership positions with the organization over the years. He is one of the founding members of the African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA). He is a founding member of the board of directors of the Lambda Community Center and he sits on the City of Atlanta's Gay and Lesbian Public Safety Task Force.

Duncan Teague is the most visibly involved black gay man in Atlanta. In his capacity as a community leader, he is a guest lecturer on college campuses and has made several appearances on local and national television programs.

When asked about what advice he would give to young black gay men, his reply was: "You have to look in the mirror everyday and say that you love yourself ... every iota of your being and know that every part of yourself was put there by someone who knew exactly what they were doing. It's really about freedom. You had better set yourself free cause nobody else will."



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Fall '92

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With the changing of the leaves so must hair color change. Fall means earthtones. Plums, deeper browns and gleaming ebony replaces golds, fiery reds, and light browns of summer.

For men...gone are box shapes, severe fades, and overly relaxed hair; replaced by rounder shapes and tapered sides. Texturizers are mild. Sideburns are longer. Goatee and five o'clock shadows are in.

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Scare Over New Virus Echoes State of AIDS Nightmare

The possibility of a deadly new virus on the loose – a specter raised last week when some 30 mysterious cases were reported at an international meeting of scientists – is reminiscent of 1981, when doctors first confronted the baffling malady the world now knows as AIDS..

As in 1981, when the first cases of AIDS surfaced, doctors and public health officials don't know the magnitude of the new problem or where it will lead.

But this time the researchers, armed with a vast amount of knowledge gleaned from studying the AIDS virus for nearly eight years, are confident the mystery will be resolved quickly. And this time, they are not faced with a world of apathy.

"In 1981, there was very little interest [in AIDS] from the media and scientific community," said Harold Jaffe of the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control's AIDS program. "But the attention on these new cases is incredible."

Gathered at the annual international AIDS conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands, scientists raised the possibility that there may be another, unknown virus causing AIDS. They reported on 30 patients who had developed an AIDS-like disease, but after repeated testing showed no evidence of infection with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

In addition, a California scientist said he had discovered a new virus in a woman suffering from the condition.

The reports became the hottest topic at the Amsterdam conference – triggering vivid memories of 1981, when doctors also groped for answers to the baffling syndrome that became known as AIDS. So far, AIDS has killed more than 152,000 Americans.

Thus far there has been no sign of "clustering" of cases by partners or geography, as there was at the start of the AIDS epidemic in 1981. Such a common denominator could indicate transmission.

World Health Organization officials said they will hold a meeting soon to determine the extent of the cases and where they are located.

The time or place of the next meeting has not been set, but the gathering could take place in Atlanta because of the extensive database on AIDS available at the Centers for Disease Control.

JUST MY OPINION

Alicia Banks

The New World Order

The city of Springfield, Oregon has outlawed homosexuality; formally proclaiming that gays officially have no rights in that city, and mandating that educators teach students that homosexuals are not human. City officials are seeking statewide compliance to this severe case of formal, legalized, dehumanization. Gay bashing in Oregon is skyrocketing.

Everyone should be appalled and afraid about the abuses of Oregon lesbians and gays. This is merely an introduction to many shocking racist, sexist, and elitist national laws to come. Those of you who betray homosexuals now, will remember your sins when you are outlawed. And then it will be too late. Lost freedoms are contagious. Get involved now in the fight against the new world order.

Transparent Protests

Homophobes bash homosexuals because they fear their own sexual confusions and temptations. The truest love is platonic. The ultimate love is one that combines platonic friendship and carnal passion. Therein lies the dilemma. The progression of intimacy is always a threat. Its limitation, always a deliberate effort. Sexual fantasies are normal and healthy. Allowing sexual fears to manifest themselves in abusive acts (verbal or physical) against those who choose to express their sexuality differently is abnormal and immoral.

Sexuality is complex. Its mystery often inspires fear. That fear often leads to emotional pain. The essence of life is to explore and define individual sexuality on one's own terms. Irrespective of the choices of others. Respectful of those choices that could never be one's own. Love and let love. Live and let live.

Alicia Banks is producer & host of "Les Chanteuses Africaines" featuring musical & literary voices of black women, Sun., 1-4 a.m., WRFG 89.3 FM

ORGANIZATIONS/SERVICES

African-American Lesbian/Gay Alliance (AALGA)
A political and social organization for black lesbians and gay men. Meets 1st Sunday of each month, 4 pm, St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Ashby & Abernathy Sts., Atlanta, GA – (404) 349-3739

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BWMT
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Coming Full Circle
African American Lesbian/Gay Network – (404) 624-1799

Hospitality Atlanta – A social organization providing entertainment for women of color P.O. Box 55410, Atlanta, GA 30308

Homegirls
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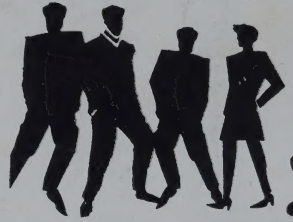

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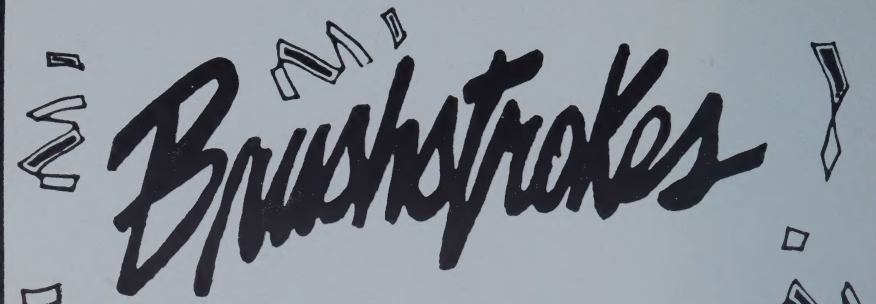

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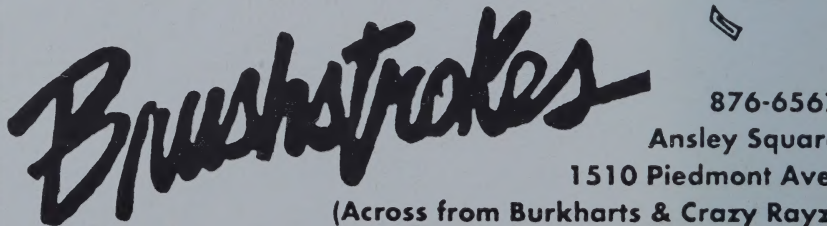

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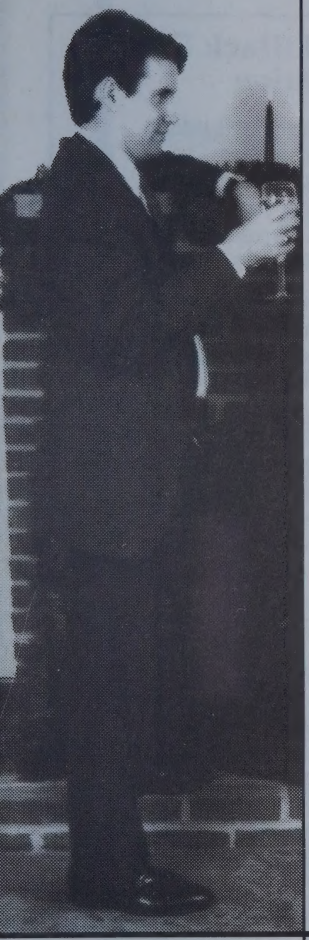

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New National Black Gay Publication

Friends would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new monthly publication. Each month we will provide you with information that we hope will be both entertaining and informative.

Friends publication evolved to provide some unification for our constantly expanding community, and to enable us to share current information on entertainment, events, bars, organizations, fashion, grooming, health, business, and news pertaining to the Black gay community. We are hoping this magazine will serve as a means for us to network on a national level.

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COVER

Jewell Gomez

See cover story, p. 12

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NEWS

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You are cordially invited to participate with the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum at its SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE and INSTITUTES. The Conference is being held at the Long Beach Hilton, in Long Beach, California, February 11-15, 1993.

For the last five years, African-American lesbians and gay men from across the country have gathered to exchange ideas and develop strategies to advance our common goals and objectives. You hold in your hands the power to be a part of making a difference in your world by attending this conference.

The 1993 program will include an AIDS Institute on Thursday with an AIDS Memorial Service at the conclusion of the day. On Friday there will be a Women's and Men's Institute which will conclude with a Co-Gender Caucus. The Cultural Institute and Leadership Institute will be incorporated into the Conference as a whole on Saturday and Sunday. The Spirituality Institute, will be on Sunday which will include plenaries with keynote Speakers and an 11:00 am Worship Service. In addition, tracks for Economics, Family and Public Policy Issues along with workshops on Health, Racism, Homophobia, and Heterosexism, a total of 36 workshops will take place on Saturday and Sunday.

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SPOTLIGHT ON

Audre Lorde, New York state poet laureate

Audre Lorde, 58, a feminist whose eloquence in challenging racial and sexual stereotypes led to her being named New York State's poet laureate, died November 17 of cancer.

Lorde maintained a home in the fashionable Judith's Fancy section of the U.S. Virgin Island. She had lived on the island for the past seven years and was known by an African name, Gamba Adisa, which reflected her advocacy of pan-African issues.

Lorde was born in New York and graduated from Hunter College in 1959. She worked as a librarian in Mount Vernon as she developed her writing style.

Wrote about cancer

She wrote of racial discrimination in her 17 books of poetry, essays and autobiography, among them 'Cables to Rage' (1970), "Coal" (1976), "The Black Unicorn" (1978) and "Zami: A New Spelling of My Name" (1983).

Her 1973 poetry collection, "From a Land Where Other People Live," was nominated for a National Book Award.

In 1980, she published "The Cancer Journals," chronicling the first stages of cancer.

"Audre Lorde's range throughout her literary career was formidable, from her black consciousness poetry of the '60s to the more evident feminist and especially feminist-of-color writings of the '70s. up to her death," said Phillip Brian Harper, professor of English and Afro-American Literature at Harvard University.

"As a contributor to women's literature, her influence was monumental," said Karin Powis, a member of the collective that runs Judith's Room, a feminist bookstore in Greenwich Village where Lorde offered readings.

She said the death "has caused quite a reaction in the women's feminist and lesbian communities in New York."

Lorde was a member of the board of directors of the Feminist Press in New York City and had founded Women of Color Press.

Survivors include a son, Jonathan Rollins, and a daughter, Elizabeth Lord-Rollins, both of New York, and her companion, Gloria Joseph.

THE

Jewell

Pat

Jewell Gomez is clearly one of the most important writers of the lesbian and gay literary movement. She is considered a major social and literary voice for lesbians of color.

Her essays, poetry and fiction have appeared in numerous anthologies such as the ground breaking Home Girls and Gay and Lesbian poetry in Our Time, a book thought to be the best collection of lesbian and gay poetry since the second world war. She has authored two collections of poetry, The Lipstick Papers and Flamingoes and Bears. This past summer her novel, The Gilda Stories, received the prestigious Lambda Literary Award in the fiction and science fiction categories. Her accolades also include the 1985 Beard's Fund Fiction Award and the 1990 Deming/ Money for Women Fund Award.

"My family gave me my literary identity," she said in a recent interview. Adding, "..they read everything: adventures, detective novels and history. I remember my great grandmother having the hardback edition of The Fall of the Roman Empire. My father read James Baldwin's Well of Loneliness. They were nondescriminating in (their) reading."

"My family lived in tenement housing. I was well loved by a family who gave me a lot despite our poverty...they gave me their joy in my presence," she recalls. "I write to convey that same sense of power; that same type of joy."

The Boston native moved to New York at the age of 22 where she earned a degree in journalism from Columbia University. She says, "I've always wanted to be a writer. At first, I thought I would go into broadcast journalism."

OVER

Gomez

Bell

However, it wasn't long before she realized that the industry was indifferent to her as a woman of color. "Journalism has particular formulas that must be followed." She felt confined by the system because she could not say and do what she wished. "(This is why) I write for feminist, lesbian and gay publications. Because they care about how I write and what I have to say."

She is distressed by what she calls "segregation in black literature." She believes heterosexual African-Americans dismiss gays and lesbians as if we don't exist. She adds, "I will not allow them to dismiss me, they have no power to do so." She also believes that there is a lack of commitment to growth and change in the writing and personal lives of straight writers and that there is a lack of vision in contemporary fiction,...a disconnection with reality.

When asked about her thoughts on why lesbians of color seem to be more organized with joint efforts to publish their work, she responds, "women had feminism for 20 years. There was a process of putting things in perspective and working together. Men are used to competition. Gay men of color have been trained to be a part of the power structure." Some of the things that she is pleased to see in the gay and lesbian literary movement is the broad spectrum of books that are being read and lesbian and gay writers that are experimental and curious. "I am most pleased with the efforts of black gay men like Randall Kenan and Melvin Dixon who are well rooted in black life and write from what has produced us."

The gay and lesbian literary movement's effort to record and make visible our lives, enables young people who are lesbian and gay to have access to material that many of today's writers did not have. This outcome of her writing is very important to Jewell. The power and influence that writer's possess comes with a certain "responsibility...we must instill in young minds the message of diversity and the value of diversity."

Ms. Gomez is currently editing a collection of her essays written titled 43 Septembers, to be published in the fall of 1993. A theatrical adaptation of The Gilda Stories is also underway for broadway production in 1995.

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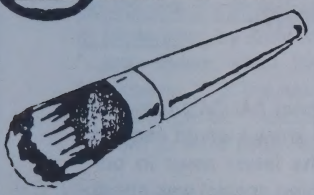

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SHIRLENE HOLMES INTERVIEW
By Patrick Bell

The typically hot June weather could not deter me from AALGA's (African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance) monthly meeting. I knew I would see old friends there, meet new one's and catch up on the latest news in our community. But also, there was a sense that some thing special was about to happen. Something that shouldn't be missed.

As anticipated, many friends that I had not seen in quite a while were there, one of the largest turnouts in recent memory. It was as if they too sensed something special and were drawn to this gathering place.

There was a presentation by Dr. Shirlene Holmes of Georgia State University. She immediately captured everyone's attention as she stood to address the group. Her long dreads were bound together with a colorful piece of cloth and her equally colorful dress fell loosely from her shoulders over her tall frame, swaying from side to side with each movement of her hands.

"Good afternoon, sisters and brothers. Thank you for allowing me to take some of your time today. I have come to AALGA for your suggestions and reactions on a play that I'm writing. I would like to present to you a few scenes from A Lady and A Woman." As we watched the dramatization, our throats overflowed with laughter and our eyes filled with tears of joy. For many of us, it was the first time that we had seen a play about Black women who love other Black women. When the scenes were completed, we leaped to our feet and cheered for more.

That was the summer of 1991. Today, Dr. Holmes sits gracefully in the living room of her Grant Park area home. She works frantically on a Christmas candy reef for a friend who she and her spouse will enjoy dinner with later in the evening. "I'm creative", she tells me. She is constantly creating something with her hands or in her mind. "I came from a land of impossibilities", says the 34 year old professor of speech communications. "I tripped over drug addicts and alcoholics to get to school sometimes, it wasn't suburbia, not a place where you would think a potential Ph.D. would be." Dr. Holmes attained this distinction (less than 2% of all doctorates are held by Black women) in 1990 from Southern Illinois University. "Something for which I will forever be proud. On that day, my mother cried. She told me I was her champion." "I am the jewel in my mother's crown," she adds. Her mother at age 19 had two small children to rear and could not fulfill all of her dreams, "...and so I'm a fulfillment of her dreams."

Dr. Holmes grew up in Jamaica Queens, New York. She discovered a love for writing when she was 9. Although as a child she was not surrounded by books. "I didn't associate books with my home. Books were associated with the library... I have a great respect for the library," she says. Adding, "I can remember at the age of 14 learning that my people wrote books. I found I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, there was a black woman on the cover. After that I read every thing that was Black."

The list of books that fueled the imagination and spirit of this budding writer

includes some of the most profound works and authors in Black American literature: Manchild in the Promise Land by Claude Brown, The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex Haley and Malcolm X, Coming of Age in Mississippi by Anne Moody. She read James Baldwin, describing him as "...just divine, what isn't James Baldwin ?" She also read Lorraine Hansberry, "...in the next century, A Raisin in the Sun will still be significant," she comments. Adding, "I fell in love with Langston and have always wanted to write (like) Richard Wright, he painted such imagery."

Reflecting on that particular time in her life, she says "I think it was such a crime that nobody told me that Black people wrote books." Shirlene was one of the first children in her neighborhood to be bussed to a predominately white school. "I felt alienated there", she says. "They didn't understand and so I began to study them. I fell in love with (the works of) Sylvia Plath".

"I came out of the darkness at 21," she explains. "I began to question everything. I started asking myself questions...why do I comb my hair ?," she laughs. It was during this time that she became concerned with her cultural and gender identity. "Basically people believe what others have taught them, they don't stop to think for themselves." "I really don't fit well with any group, because I'm not exactly like this (or that). I don't want to be labeled unless I choose it. I don't walk around with labels I don't choose." Adding, "I have chosen to call myself an African...Now that I've taken care of me, I can appreciate others." Shirlene is fascinated with, "how you live your life and how you earn your death." And so she continuously observes and examines the smallest details of her interactions with others.

"I really knew I was a playwright when I wrote A Lady and A Woman. I studied (the art of) play writing. I read many plays. I wrote some failed attempts, with good ideas. I created a world with complexities," she says. I asked her what she had learned about herself during the course of writhing A Lady and A Woman. She replied," ...I realized I'm more than what I think I am. I learned that I'm a very passionate person, (she) feels deeply. I realized that I'm funny, humor is as much medicine as anything else."

"I am especially pleased when gay and lesbian people can find something in the play that reflects them and identify with it as something beautiful. My characters are distinctly Black, they cuss if they have too, they do Black things and talk Black," she explains. "(This play) gives visibility to Black women loving (other) Black women because it is their choice. (It) challenges the African-American image of Black women." "I create images that make us think an make us see more than just a sexual community without denying the sexual aspects of our lives."

The play first appeared as a work in progress at the 14th Street Playhouse in Midtown. The reaction from women have been positive, "...lesbians, straight women and straight but not narrow women," she laughs. "I want Black gay men to come and see a drama about sisters and learn something about themselves. We do have common links and God given differences." Of course, the play is for everyone to see, learning about themselves and others in the process. "Black lesbians exist, (we are) people who are real,"

she adds. "I want (the audience to start off seeing two beautiful sisters who are so beautiful that they want to share their lives with other." "The play is about Black women's lives...Black women have been sharing their lives (sexually and platonically for a long time," she continued.

Shirlene Holmes understands the power of writing and creating images that

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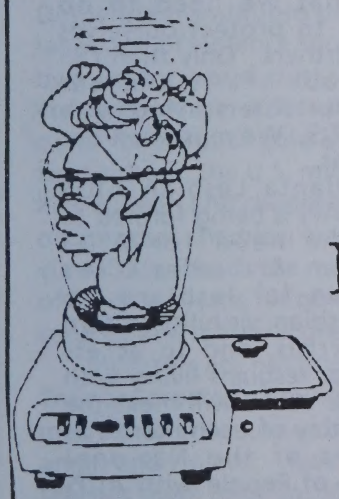

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AIDS and Black Lesbians: Barriers to Safer Behavior

by Tonia Poteat

To be disregarded disassociated/ to lay in a bed/ for a father to spit upon a/ beautiful face and/ race to the mirror cause/ you are a black woman/in America/ A lesbian's choice you are/ not to have a face or/ voice-stop/ denying lesbians do die/ with the aids of America. (Positive Women: Voices of Women Living with AIDS. Andrea Rudd and Darien Taylor, ed.).

Those words are from "AIDS of America," a poem by Imani Harrington, a black lesbian living with HIV. According to the only government study on lesbians and AIDS, 80% of the lesbians living with HIV disease are black or Hispanic. (*Epidemiology of Reported Cases of AIDS in Lesbians, U.S. 1980-89.* "American Journal of Public Health". vol 80. #11. 11/90).

However, many women in our community believe that we cannot get AIDS. The truth is that we practice many of the same behaviors that put everyone else at risk: we use drugs and share needles; we have unprotected sex with women and/or men; we get inseminated; and we receive blood transfusions.

Despite these facts, lesbians have remained invisible within the AIDS crisis. The Centers for Disease Control does not list "women who have sex with women" in their statistics on AIDS, although they do publish statistics on men who have sex with men. There are only four "exposure categories" (aka risk behaviors) for women and six for men. Women's exposure categories are IV drug use, recipient of blood products, heterosexual contact, and no identified risk. Women whose only risk behavior was sex with another women would be listed under No Identified Risk (NIR). The category of NIR is twice as large for women as it is for men.

The first documented case of female-to-female transmission appeared in medical journals in 1984; however, no full-scale study of woman-to-woman transmission has ever been conducted.

If we are to truly combat AIDS in our communities we must first acknowledge that we are at risk and that our lives are worth saving. Only then can we look honestly at our behaviors and decide what we need to do differently to protect ourselves and our partners. Only then can we open our hearts and our minds to our sisters living with HIV and AIDS. We must look out for ourselves.

The Atlanta Lesbian AIDS Project (ALAP) is being formed to address the need for AIDS education & safer sex information for lesbians, to promote lesbian visibility within the AIDS crisis, and to access resources for lesbians living with HIV disease. ALAP will meet the second Sunday of each month at the offices of the National Association of People with AIDS at 44 12th Street. For more information call the AIDS Hotline for Women (404) 888-9991 or contact Tonia at (404) 624-3563.

JUST MY OPINION

Genocide

The new world order is in progress – biomedical genocide is in effect. The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services is performing psychosurgery upon African-American males in an alleged effort to study "innate violence." According to the U.S.'s highest ranking government psychiatrist "Young black men are like monkeys – all they do is have sex and kill each other." Psychosurgery includes chemical lobotomy, dubious genetic testing, and taming of aggression.

Violence among blacks is simply a variation on a theme. Desperate translations of the language of violence spoken by a violent world. Just as young black men kill each other for drugs or gold or tennis shoes, the U.S. military kills women and children for oil, imposes chemical warfare via AIDS, and aids the murder of South Africans for political security and material greed.

Monsters are not born. They are created. Young black men do no enter the world angry and violent. This world teaches them to be so. We must counter-train the warriors we love; teach them to channel anger into positive rebellion; work to destroy life's monsters rather than be destroyed by them.

Love and Let Love

Homophobes are ignorant. Unaware that homosexuals exist in every species – that they are as diverse as other persons; good and bad; monogamous and promiscuous; obvious and closeted; masculine and feminine; rich and poor. They are parents, spouses, coworkers, siblings, etc. They are wise, strong and talented.

What goes on between two consenting adults in the privacy of their bedroom is ultimately and solely their personal choice and private affair. Those who bash homosexuality could benefit greatly from improved vision – the ability to see the beauty of lovers, irrespective of sexuality.

Love is a precious gift from the Goddess. No one should dare dictate how such a gift should be shared. There is beauty in all true lovers. The essence of life is to love and let love.

Alicia Banks is producer & host of "Les Chanteuses Africaines" featuring musical & literary voices of black women, Sun., 1-4 a.m., WRFG 89.3 FM

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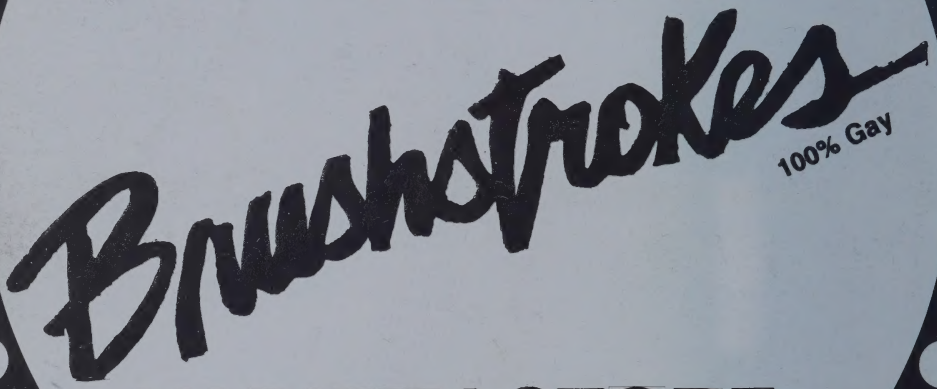

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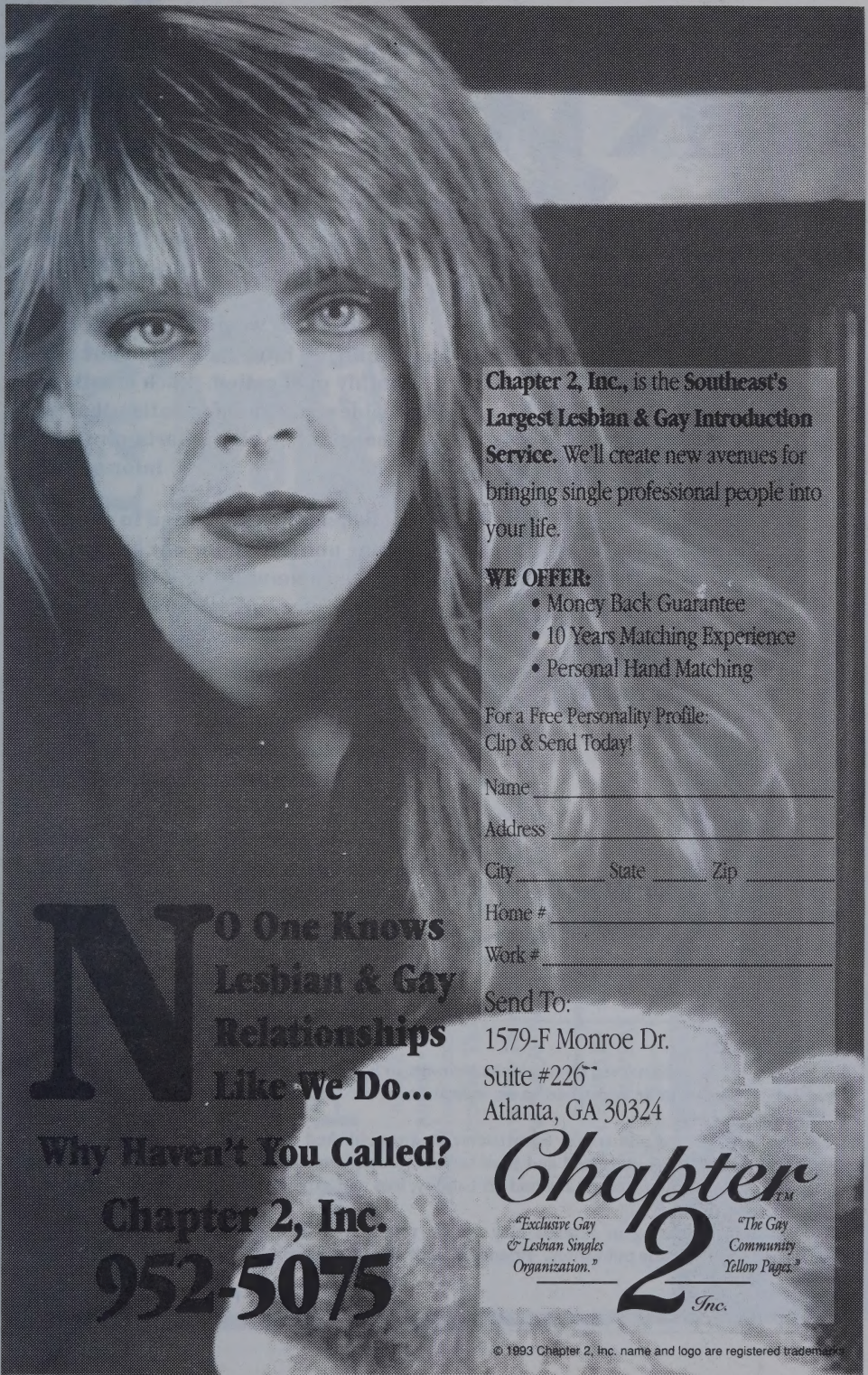

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see Centerfold

New National Black Gay Publication

Friends would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new monthly publication. Each month we will provide you with information that we hope will be both entertaining and informative.

Friends publication evolved to provide some unification for our constantly expanding community, and to enable us to share current information on entertainment, events, bars, organizations, fashion, grooming, health, business, and news pertaining to the Black gay community. We are hoping this magazine will serve as a means for us to network on a national level.

For subscriptions or to submit information, write or call Post Office Box 38303, Atlanta, Georgia 30334 (404) 621-5078

Disclaimer

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News

NAACP Joins Marchers to Urge Completion of Unfinished Civil Rights Agenda

Washington, D.C. — In a historic move, leaders of the gay and lesbian, women's rights and religious communities were joined by the NAACP, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, in supporting the National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights on Liberation Sunday, April 25, 1993 in Washington.

In an unprecedented decision, the NAACP's national board of directors voted unanimously to endorse the March on Washington as the issue of civil rights for gays and lesbians exploded in the national consciousness.

The endorsement "marks the beginning of a new and very important coalition," stated Dr. William Gibson, chair of the NAACP Board. "The NAACP supports efforts to end discrimination against gay men and lesbians in areas of American life where all citizens deserve equal protection and equal opportunity under the law. The NAACP endorses and will participate in this historic national march."

"Support from the NAACP comes at a pivotal moment in the lesbian and gay civil rights movement," states Nadine Smith, one of the four National Co-Chairs of the March.

The March is the focal point of a week-long series of more than 150 political and cultural events to advance the lesbian and gay civil rights movement. Mass lobbying days will precede and follow the March to achieve the demands on the March's platform, including a call for passage of a federal civil rights bill, and end to the military's ban on gays, and increased funding for AIDS research, education and patient care.

For more information about the April 25 March on Washington, call the March on Washington National Office at (202) 628-0493.

1993 H.R.C.F. Dinner Co-Chairs Announce Theme

Chairing the 6th annual Atlanta H.R.C.F. Dinner are Pamela Evans and Robert Gleadall. The Dinner is scheduled for May 22, 1993 at the Georgia World Congress Center.

The theme for the 1993 Dinner, "There's A Place Called Hope," acknowledges the theme of the winning Clinton campaign, implying that for the gay and lesbian community, now more than ever before, there is a place called hope.

It also underscores the responsibility of the community to continue to expand it's support of the Clinton Administration and those in the Congress who are supportive of the agenda advanced by H.R.C.F. The recent broadly-based opposition to removal of the ban on gays and lesbians in the military is a strong indication of how much more work needs to be done.

The two co-chairs also reemphasized the need for volunteers to assist with ticket sales, ad sales, logistics and hosting house parties. To volunteer or for information, contact the Atlanta Dinner Committee at P.O. Box 8152, Atlanta, GA 30306 or call 662-4280.

News

BWMT "Mixers"

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta, Atlanta's gay interracial social and political organization wants to invite interested individuals and couples to "check us out" this spring at our Thursday night "mixers" 8-10 p.m. They will be held Thursday, April 8th and Thursday, May 13th.

Location and directions to the events can be obtained by calling 892-BWMT and leaving your name and number. BWMT/Atlanta is changing to suit the needs of Atlanta' gay black and white men in this Olympic decade.

Attention All Black Men . . . Call For Submissions

Do You Like Sex? Do you Like to Write About It?

Poet Rodney McCoy, Jr., whose work was recently featured in *The Road Before Us: 100 Gay Black Poets*, is compiling an anthology of erotic work by Black Men. To be titled *Creating Heat, Shedding Light: An Anthodlogy of Black Men's Erotica,* he is asking for Black Men to submit sexually-explicit fictional short stories and poetry.

Of special interest is work that explores any of the following themes:

- Body Image
- How Men Perceive Other Men
- Homophobia
- Racist Stereotypes of Black Sexuality
- Monogamy vs. Many Partners
- How Men Perceive Women
- Interracial Dating
- Sadomasochism
- Cross-dressing
- Public Sex
- How Do Black Men Deal with (or Fail to Deal with) AIDS in our Sexual Relationships
- Intercultural Dating (e.g., relationships between African-Americans and Afro-Caribbeans)
- Sexual Identity ("Am I gay or straight?" "Am I bixexual?" Do I have to identify?")

Submissions should be sent, no later than May 31st, to Rodney McCoy, Jr., 132 Lafayette Avenue #2R, Brooklyn, NY 11238-1079. Please include a self-address stamped envelope with your submissions. Call (718) 237-0116 for more information.

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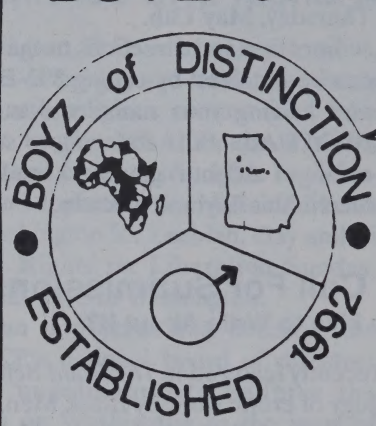

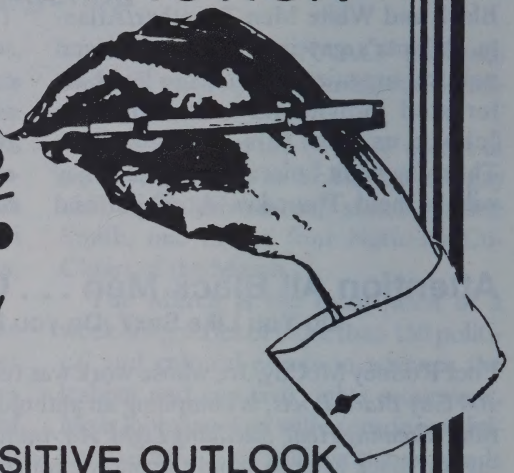

DRAWING A POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON OUR COMMUNITY.

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CELEBRATE!!! THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOYZ of DISTINCTION THIS LABOR DAY WEEKEND IN ATLANTA, GA. WE WILL HAVE A FULL WEEKEND ITINERARY WITH YOU IN MIND. DON'T FORGET LABOR DAY WEEKEND SEPTEMBER 3RD THROUGH THE 5TH. WATCH OUT FOR DETAILS.

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News

African Descent Coalition

The Coalition of African Descent represents 25 LesBiGay and AIDS services organizations in Atlanta, Georgia. The Coalition was borne out of a need to end the conspiracy of silence apropos of people who are twice marginalized; African-American Lesibans, Gays and Bisexuals.

For too long in LesBiGay movement, when Gay White men "ACTed UP" to advocate their positions on issues, African-Americans sat down, and acquiesced to the entrenched homophobia in the African community and the attendant racism and sexism in the LesBiGay community. CAD moves to give voice to the particular concerns of African-American Lesbians and Gay Men as we stand in the double/triple oppression of racism, sexism and heterosexism.

CAD held a press conferene on March 29 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. The Coalition demanded several goodwill concessions from the administration of Morehouse College following an incidence of blatant homophobia at the all male, historically Black Liberal Arts institution.

Support for the group has come from Mayor Jackson; Reps. John Lewis and Cynthia McKinney; as well as Dr. Johnetta Cole, President of Spelman College. Dr. Cole has been very critical of the status quo homophobia/heterosexism and sexism in the African-American community.

The staff of President LeRoy Keith of Morehouse College has verbally responded to CAD's request for a meeting with the Coalition as well as an investigation of the allegations of "gay bashing" at the College. Details are sketchy at best and CAD will continue to work on this matter until each request is met. The original Coaltion requests:

1) A meeting with Dr. Keith;

2) A public apology to the individuals in reference to each specific incident;

3) An investigation of the incident;

4) College administration provide sensitivity training for faculty, staff and students (i.e., workshops on diversity, homophobia and sexism); and

5) College sanctioning of a support organization for Gay and Bisexual students.

CAD was appalled and offended by the threats, profane behavior and anti-intellectual climate at the institution that nurtured the foremost human rights activist that this country has produced. It is in the tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that the organization endeavors to build bridges over the great chasm of "otherness" left by years of silence and oppression. Indeed, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Medics Honored

A Gala Reception for lesbian and gay physicians and medical students in conjunction with the National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equal Rights will be held Saturday, April 24th, 5-7 p.m. at the Columbus Club at Union Station. For more information, contact AAPHR, 273 Church Street, San Francisco, CA 94114 (415) 255-4547.

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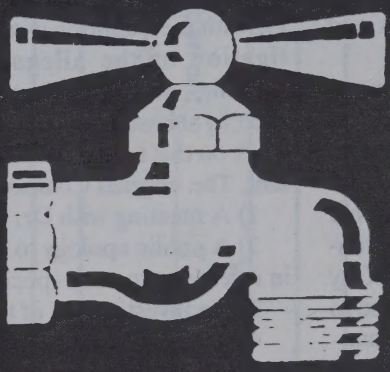

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HEALTH

Breaking the Silence Around Lesbian/Gay Battering in the African-American Community

by Patrick Bell

The African-American lesbian and gay community of Atlanta is slowly coming to terms with the recent loss of one of our most prominent activists, Venus Landin. In the early night hours of March 3rd, Venus was shot to death by her estranged lover who then turned the gun on herself, taking her own life as well.

As a catalyst for the healing process to begin, the African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA) held a special workshop on lesbian and gay battering. It is not uncommon for isolation to occur to the most outgoing and extraverted individuals explained the workshop facilitator. " . . . the batterer or perpetrator seeks to control different aspects of the victim's life or all of his/her life." She continued by stating the following forms of isolation:

- Isolation from friends and family
- Interception of mail and phone calls; there's no privacy in the home and no boundaries – what's yours is hers/his
- Batterer takes the keys or cars
- She/He wants partner to move away from friends/family
- She/He wants to go everywhere with partner; all socializing has to be as a couple
- She/He is always in the midst of a crisis so partner can never leave
- She/He creates embarrassing scenes so no one visits any more except her/his friends
- Due to the jealousy, the controlled person limits contacts with friends so she/he doesn't have to hear the jealous remarks or the rage

The result of isolation is the development of a sense of helplessness and powerlessness.

There are many myths that must be challenged constantly in lesbian and gay relationships:

- Battering does not occur – Some form of physical or emotional abuse takes place in as many as 50% of lesbian couples and perhaps the number is higher with gay couples.
- It is always the butch in the relationship that batters – There is no correlation between role playing and abusive behavior.
- Battering occurs only in bars – Most violently abusive behavior occurs in private away from the public's eye.
- Battering only occurs in SM relationships – The type of relationship or sexual encounters do not predispose one to an abusive relationship.
- Battering only occurs between peopole who have been abused as children – There is a cross section of batterers and victims.
- Substance abuse causes battering – These are separate issues.

The facilitator noted that battering is not limited to anything, including family history, sexual practices, race, class or age. Some of the most successful and publicly known people have been and are victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse. Most batterers do not acknowledge they have a problem; their abusiveness so ef-

(HEALTH continued next page)

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the Atlanta Lesbian & Gay Pride Committee stands firm in uniting all segments of the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay communities; and

WHEREAS, Venus Landin stood firm in her commitment to unite our communities through her work; and

WHEREAS, Venus Landin served our community through the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee, the Public Safety Committee, Lesbian/Gay Task Force for the City of Atlanta, ZAMI, the Atlanta Lambda Community Center, and the African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance, never asking for anything in return;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee remains committed to unite all segments of our community through the annual Pride Celebration and other Pride sponsored events; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the 1993 Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebration is hereby dedicated in the name of Venus Landin.

Dated this Eighteenth day of March, Nineteen Hundred Ninety Three.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee

(HEALTH from previous page)
fectively gives them control and power over their partners that they don't have the desire to change.

Victims of domestic violence cannot control the actions or perceptions of their partners. They must come to the realization that this is not "normal" when it becomes habitual and a pattern is established. It is important for them to protect themselves from further emotional and or physical harm by removing themselves from the relationship and seek some type of counseling or support group therapy.

For help, battered lesbians can call 688-9436 and battered gays can call 873-9832.

ENTERTAINMENT

Sister

Sister and I use to play, Everynight, and Everyday
I was 5, she was 10, Sister was my dearest Friend.
Sister taught me what to say, when I got on my knees to pray.
Sister showed me what to do, in order to learn to tie my shoes.
Sister made me understand, what it took to make a Man.
Courage, Strength, and Honesty, was my Sister's Policy . . .

Sister nearly passed away, the day I announced that I was gay.
She couldn't understand how I could say, that I'd become the other way;
"What is there to understand? Yes it's true, I love my Man.
6 foot 2 Child, handsome, and tan. He treats me nice, and sweet, and grand" . . .

Sister said; "I won't have a brother, who calls another Man his Lover . . .
You're a disgrace to this Family's name . . . How could you make me so ashamed!"
The things Sister said nearly made me cry, but I held those tears way back in my eye.
The things Sister said, made me sad, but the truth was out and I was glad . . .

For no longer did I have to lie . . . No more questions asking why . . .
Never again another endless blind date, with one of my Sister's old classmates . . .
Sister never spoke to me again, Sister said: "Hell No!" we couldn't be freinds . . .
this silence went on for more than a year,
but a change of events made everything clear . . .

Sister looks into the sky, wondering and asking the good Lord why;
"First you took Daddy, then you took Mother, all I had left was my baby brother.
Sister's eyes are filled with fears, Sister's eyes are filled with tears,
all alone, with no one left, looks like Sister's by herself . . .

Sister never was the same, only memories do remain . . .
She says now: "If only my heart had changed . . .
My Sister's guilt, drove her insane.

Singer/Poet R. Leigh Johnson (Tre') was born July 21, 1970 in Atlanta, Georgia to Blues Musician Roy L. Johnson, Jr., and his wife Juanita M. Vazquez. He is an active member of the African-American Gay Alliance (AALGA), and a former member of the Wordsmith Society, a gay and lesbian writer's guild. He is currently working on this first collection of poetry and short stories entitled "Listen to My Soul Singing."

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ENTERTAINMENT

"Bessie's Blues"

Bernardine Mitchell stars as Bessie Smith and herself in the musical which features the superior on-stage talents of Crystal Fox, Cheryl Renee, Alexia Jones, Mark Ford, Barry Bruce, Brian Chandler, and Khalil Reed, under the music direction of Keith Rawls, with choreography by Patdro Harris. The world premiere musical finale of Jomandi's 14th Mainstage Season opens, April 9 to May 2 at the 14th Street Playhouse.

Tom Jones, Jomandi Co-Artistic Director, was prompted to write and direct the musical out of his fascination and respect for the talent of Ms. Mtichell, and as a personal testament to the legacy of generations of blues artists. "We are a blues people and our blues is the same today, as it was yesterday; it is the music that heals us, and revives us. Bernardine Mitchell is in our time what Bessie Smith was in hers. She is part of a constant that heals us, a continuum that we call the blues."

"Bessie" is not a musical examination of what the blues was – but an assertion of what it is. It is a musical exposition – a musical journey to discover the cultural womb from which blues singers continue to be born. It is an odyssey of the blues which explores that music as an expression of pain, self-love, carnal-love, and survival.

Dramatically, and musically, writer Tom Jones places Bessie Smith and Bernardine Mitchell at opposite ends of a continuum of artists who provide the soul's release for a people trying to understand all of the colors of their lives through singing the blues. Since Mitchell plays both Bessie and herself, the musical is a staging of a symbolic confrontation between the two women – a symbolic meeting of the minds – through the juxtaposition of events in their lives and their music.

The talent assembled for the premiere of "Bessie's Blues" reads like a who's who "tres celebre" in Atlanta's cultural scene. The world premiere affords Atlanta audiences a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of history in the making. The musical, like the blues, is destined to be a classic. From the first note, "Bessie" establishes a tone that is mature, entertaining, and unabashed – yet tastefully served.

Jomandi offers an advisory that "Bessie" is recommended for the mature audience, the music connoisseur, the curious and the good-time loving. Call 873-1099. For group, senior citizen, student, and other discounts, call 876-6346.

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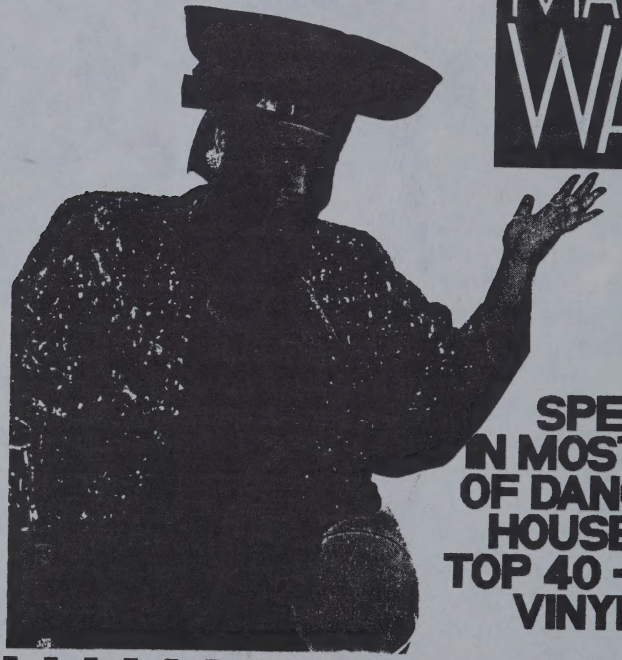

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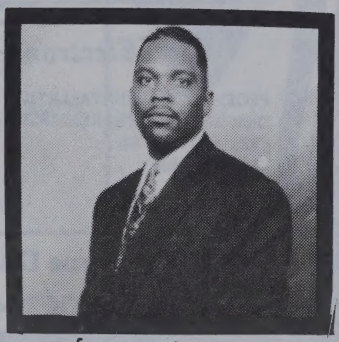

Hair Care for Warm Weather

With the weather getting warmer more attention is going to your hair. Here are some tips for healthy, beautiful hair. First you need a good shampoo and conditioner. Lustrasilk Hot Oil Shampoo. This shampoo revitalizes oils lost thru chemical services, exposure to the sun and helps reduce breakage and dry, itchy scalp. A condition I recommend is Nexus Hometress. A moisturizing conditioner, it can also be used as a hair dressing. Second, since hair seems to grow faster during the warmer months, trips to your stylist should become more frequent. Last, but not least, a good hair dressing is needed for protection from sun. Kemi Oil is great for chemically treated and natural hair . . . Dallas Collier

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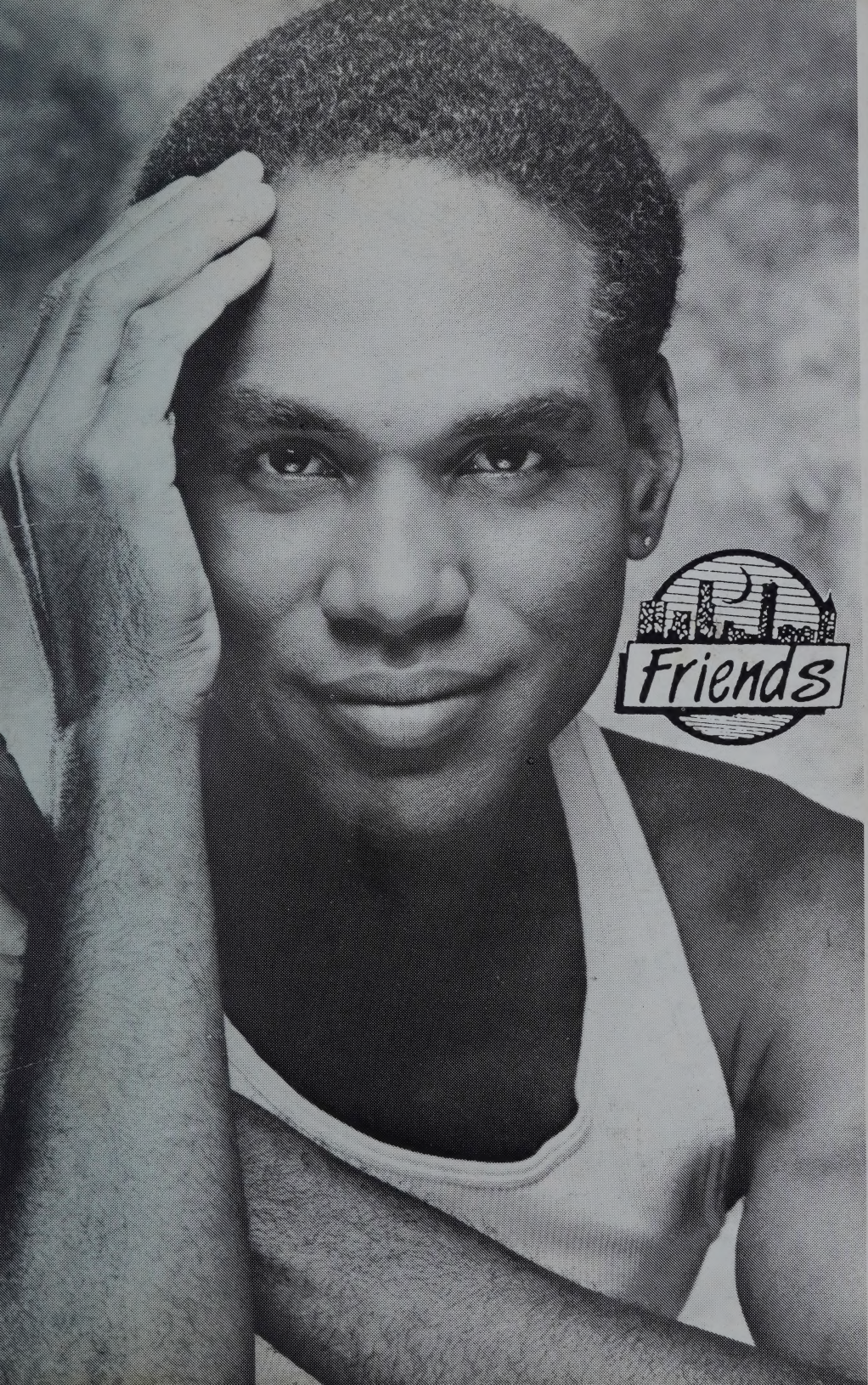
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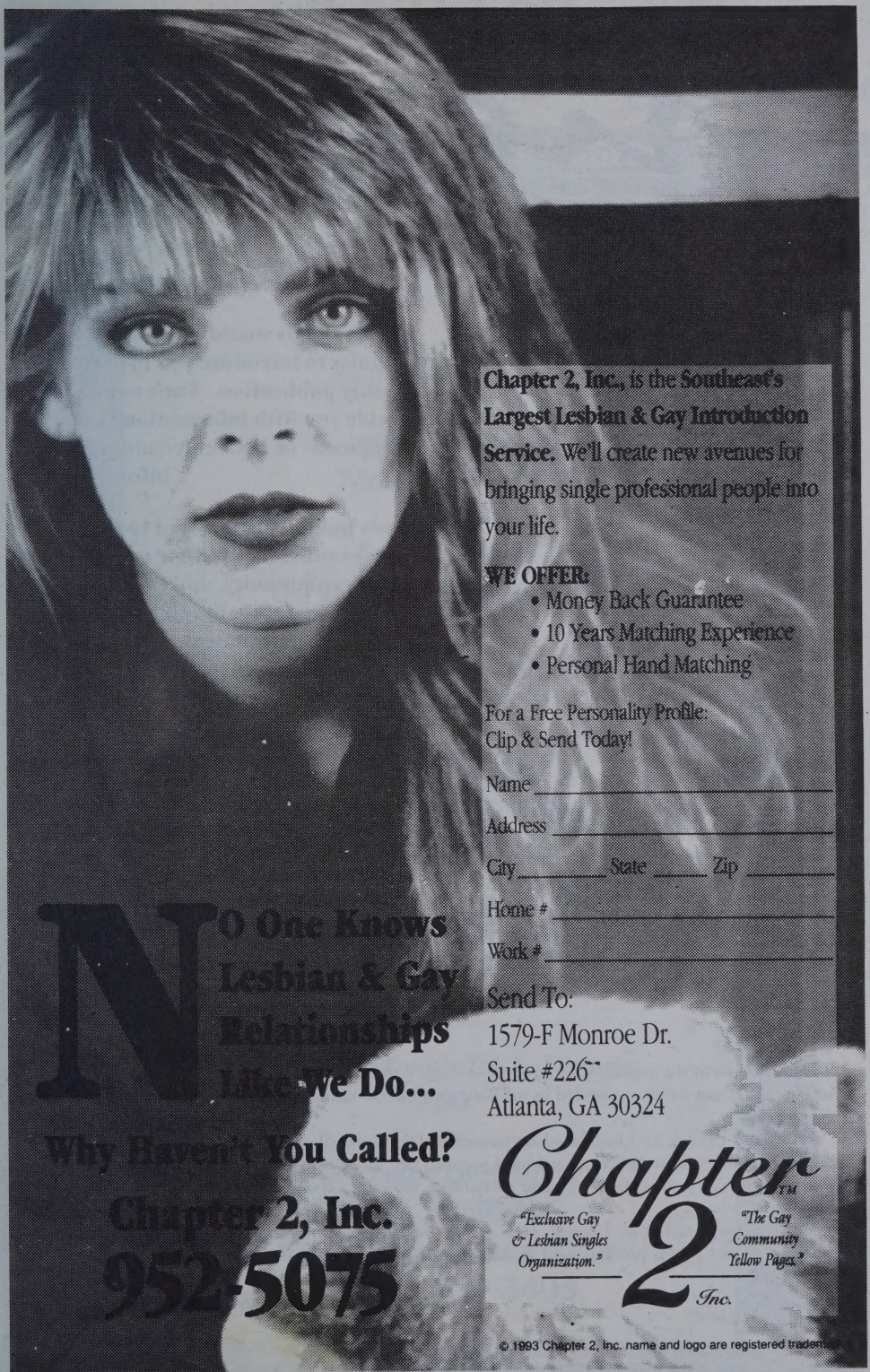

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R. Leigh Jonson (Tre')

On the Cover

Phil Wilson
see Centerfold

New National Black Gay Publication

Friends would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our new monthly publication. Each month we will provide you with information that we hope will be both entertaining and informative.

Friends publication evolved to provide some unification for our constantly expanding community, and to enable us to share current information on entertainment, events, bars, organizations, fashion, grooming, health, business, and news pertaining to the Black gay community. We are hoping this magazine will serve as a means for us to network on a national level.

For subscriptions or to submit information, write or call Post Office Box 38303, Atlanta, Georgia 30334 (404) 621-5078

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News

Pride Week — June 19-27, 1993

In 1970, one year after the Stonewall Rebellion, 125 lesbians and gay men marched in Atlanta's first Gay Pride demonstration. This year, 100,000 people may follow their lead. In 1993, "It's TIme to Tell America!" Be a part of Atlanta's most successful Pride event yet.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

- **22nd Family Reunion / Saturday in the Park** (Piedmont Park)
  Sports Exhibition/Competition, Picnic & Entertainment
  Evening Entertainment / Dance
- **Candlelight March and Vigil**
  A march from Piedmont Park to John Howell Park, located a few blocks away on Virginia Avenue
- **Commitment Ceremony**
- **Pride Market / Exhibition** (Piedmont Park, June 26 & 27)
- **Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade and Rally**
  Parade — Civic Center — Grand Marshalls, Duncan Teague & Deanna Collins
  Rally — Piedmont Park: national, regional and local entertainers and speakers help celebrate Pride.

RELATED EVENTS

- **Fourth Tuesday Business Expo**
- **Atlanta Interfaith Service**

For more information on planned events and how to volunteer, call the Pride line at (404) 662-4533. Pride meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month. Donations may be sent to ALGPC, Post office Box 54924, Atlanta, Georgia 30308-0024.

ALGPC Pride Market

The Atlanta Lesbian and Gay Pride Committee is looking for artists and gay-owned/friendly businesses and organizations to participate in Pride Market '93. This market will give you and your business or organization an opportunity to show your pride in our community while merchandising your art, crafts, products and services during Atlanta's 1993 Pride Celebration taking place June 26-27.

For further information and an application, call the Pride Line at (404) 662-4533 or write to ALGPC, Post Office Box 54024, Atlanta, GA 30308-0024.

Atlanta's 1993 Pride Merchandise

T-shirts, banners, pins, caps, etc. are now available at the following stores:

Brush Storkes
Funny Business
Griffin Leather
Mohawk Leather
Poster Hut
Prometheus Unbound
The Eagle

For more information, please call the Pride Line at (404) 622-4533.

News

Third Annual Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Day "a Family of PRIDE"

Washington, D.C.'s Third Annual Black Lesbian and Gay Pride Day (DC BLGPD) will be held on Memorial Day Weekend, May 28-30, 1993. Adopting the national pride theme "a Family of PRIDE" the celebration will be preceded by a weekend of recreational, cultural and AIDS informational activities.

Friday, May 28, local bars and clubs will open their doors for kickoff parties followed by a midnight cruise on the Spirit of Washington. Enjoy three large decks full of dancing, entertainment, food and fun.

Saturday, May 29, local and national artists will be the focus. The art and film festival will be held during the day and for those late night owls, the Black Pride Warehouse Party, featuring the latest house beats, will provide continuous music and entertainment for those wishing to dance the night away.

Sunday, May 30, "Black Pride Day," begins with a prayer breakfast hosted by Faith Temple, a local church ministering to the Black Lesbian and Gay community. At 12:00 Noon, rain or shine, the climax of the weekend is the outdoor festival at Banneker Field Playground and Recreation Center. The stage is set for a non-stop spectacular show-of-shows featuring local and national entertainers. "Black Pride" T-shirts, buttons, food, beverages, books, jewelry and AIDS information will be available.

A package deal has been developed for those persons planning to attend all of the Black Lesbiaan and Gay Pride Day '93 events. For more information, call toll free outside of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (1-800) 497-0693 or (703) 660-2649 locally, to place your order today!

Travel Accomodations

The following hotels are participating with special room rates from May 28th to 31st. – ask for "Black Pride Day/Family Reunion."

- Days Inn Washington, D.C.
  2700 New York Avenue, N.E.
  $100.48 per person for 3 days
  Phone : (202) 832-5800
- Days Inn Downtown
  1201 K Street, N.W.
  $127.12 per person for 3 days
  Phone: (202) 842-1020
- Howard Inn
  2225 Georgia Avenue, N.W.
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News

Musicians Needed

The Greater Atlatna Music Ensemble (GAME), the lesbian and gay band in Atlanta, is looking for instrumentalists. We are a mixed interracial group (men and women – woodwind and brass), looking to expand our numbers. GAME provides a social and cultural alternative in Atlanta, both for performers and for our audiences. GAME meets every Monday from 7:30 to 9:30 at St. Bartholemew's Episcopal Church on LaVista Road (3 blocks East of Briarcliff Road). No auditions are required, ALL instruments are welcomed. For more information, please call 872-3135.

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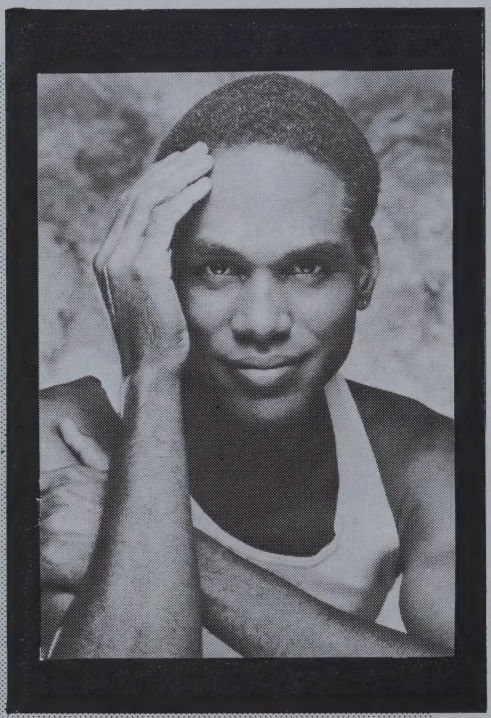
THE

Phil Wilson is one of the most visibly active Black gay men in America. He was born in Chicago, Illinois on April 22, 1956 where he was raised. The oldest son of Tebo and Ina Wilson, he has one sister and two brothers. Wilson holds a B.A. and a B.F.A. from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, Illinois. He has been living with HIV disease for twelve years.



Wilson is currently the Director of Public Policy at AIDS Project Los Angeles. APLA's Public Policy Department interacts with national, state and local governments and drafts legislation to increase public funding for AIDS-related research, education and support services, and to affect public policy in the interest of those with AIDS and HIV disease. The department also directs the Citizens and Neighborhood Networks.

As the former AIDS Coordinator for the City of Los Angeles, Wilson was responsible for implementing, monitoring and supervising the AIDS policy for the country's second largest city, as well as directing the city's AIDS residential, education, awareness and rental assistance programs. He also hosted a monthly cable television show and oversaw the workplace training for 65,000 Los Angeles City employees.

Among his accomplishments are: one of the founders of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation and the Cris Brownlee Hospice, Blacks Living with AIDS and HIV disease, the

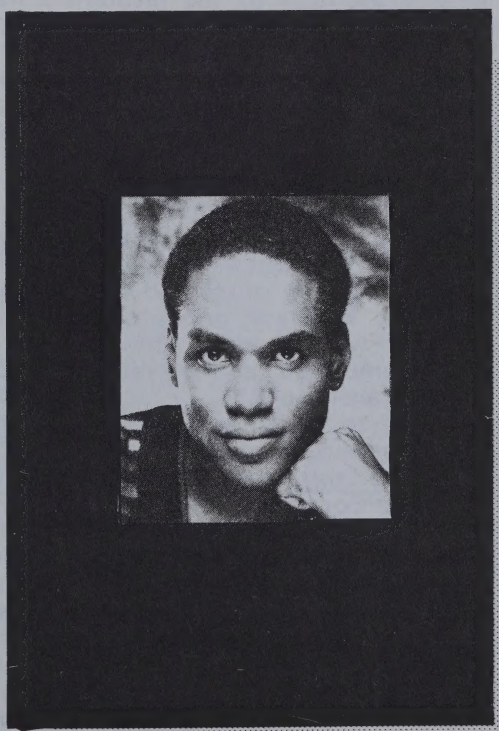
COVER

AIDS Prevention Team, and the Gay Men of Color HIV Consortium. He is the Co-Chair of the Los Angeles County HIV Plannning Council, a member of the California Life Lobby, and advisor to the Los Angeles County AIDS Commission, and the founder and current Co-Chair of the Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum.

Wilson was a founding staff member of Stop AIDS Los Angeles. He has worked for the Minority AIDS Project as deputy director and the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention as director of Education and Training. He currently sits on the board of the AIDS Action Council and the Minority AIDS Project and is a past board member of the National AIDS Network, the South Central AIDS Hospice Committee, and the National Association of Black and White Men Together. Wilson has written many articles about living with HIV and is often called upon as a nationally recognized speaker and health educator.

Receipt of many awards include Man of the Year by Christopher Street West, the Gay and Lesbian Commuinity Services Center and the Public Official of the Year by the Stonewall Democratic Club.

Friends will be doing an indept interview with Phil in an upcoming issue. We at Friends applaud Phil for all his efforts.



HEALTH

AIDS and Black Lesbians: Barriers to Safer Behavior

by Tonia Poteat

To be disregarded disassociated/ to lay in a bed/ for a father to spit upon a/ beautiful face and/ race to the mirror cause/ you are a black woman/in America/ A lesbian's choice you are/ not to have a face or/ voice-stop/ denying lesbians do die/ with the aids of America. (Positive Women: Voices of Women Living with AIDS. Andrea Rudd and Darien Taylor, ed.).

Those words are from "AIDS of America," a poem by Imani Harrington, a black lesbian living with HIV. According to the only government study on lesbians and AIDS, 80% of the lesbians living with HIV disease are black or Hispanic. (*Epidemiology of Reported Cases of AIDS in Lesbians, U.S. 1980-89.* "American Journal of Public Health". vol 80. #11. 11/90).

However, many women in our community believe that we cannot get AIDS. The truth is that we practice many of the same behaviors that put everyone else at risk: we use drugs and share needles; we have unprotected sex with women and/or men; we get inseminated; and we receive blood transfusions.

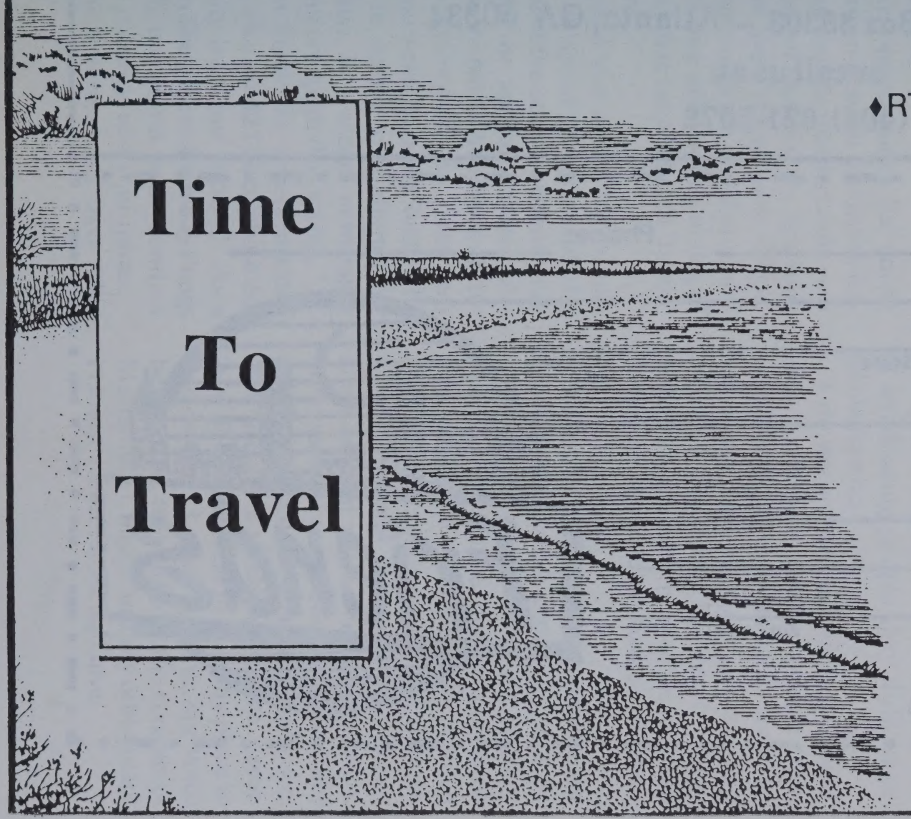
Despite these facts, lesbians have remained invisible within the AIDS crisis. The Centers for Disease Control does not list "women who have sex with women" in their statistics on AIDS, although they do publish statistics on men who have sex with men. There are only four "exposure categories" (aka risk behaviors) for women and six for men. Women's exposure categories are IV drug use, recipient of blood products, heterosexual contact, and no identified risk. Women whose only risk behavior was sex with another women would be listed under No Identified Risk (NIR). The category of NIR is twice as large for women as it is for men.

The first documented case of female-to-female transmission appeared in medical journals in 1984; however, no full-scale study of woman-to-woman transmission has ever been conducted.

If we are to truly combat AIDS in our communities we must first acknowledge that we are at risk and that our lives are worth saving. Only then can we look honestly at our behaviors and decide what we need to do differently to protect ourselves and our partners. Only then can we open our hearts and our minds to our sisters living with HIV and AIDS. We must look out for ourselves.

The Atlanta Lesbian AIDS Project (ALAP) is being formed to address the need for AIDS education & safer sex information for lesbians, to promote lesbian visibility within the AIDS crisis, and to access resources for lesbians living with HIV disease. ALAP will meet the second Sunday of each month at the offices of the National Association of People with AIDS at 44 12th Street. For more information call the AIDS Hotline for Women (404) 888-9991 or contact Tonia at (404) 624-3563.

HOLIDAY GETAWAY



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Editorial

To Bill Morris, A Morehouse Man

by Patrick Bell

The fall of 1992 was an unprecedented time in the history of Morehouse College. To the gay and lesbian sensitive, there was an air of change developing, faint rumblings could be heard at the core of a silent issue that had the possibility of moving Morehouse into the reality of the 1990's. A series of workshops, organized by Ron Lawyer, a senior, had been planned throughout the school year to address homosexuality and AIDS in the African-American community. The tip of the iceberg was beginning to melt.

Here were opportunities for young adults of African descent to discuss lesbian and gay issue's intellectually and honestly, many of them for the first time in their short lives. Here were opportunities to communicate and foster new levels of tolerance and understanding of somethng that has been labeled "taboo" in our culture.

Mr. Morris, I was one of the people scheduled to speak at some of the programs, all of the other panelists were either friends or acquaintances. Although you were one of hundreds of students who attended the first two programs; you were, however, one of the most vocal in stating your disgust for homosexuality. In a recent newspaper interview, you are quoted as saying, "... I wanted to know, as a heterosexual Black male, what could I do to phase out homosexuality from our society." As a Black gay brother, there are many things that disturb me about your conduct towards the panelists and your quote.

Too many heterosexuals have what I've decided to call, a superiority complex. There is the flawed assumption that you or anyone else can "phase out" the innate lifestyle of a thriving sub-culture. As a thoroughly content member of this sub-culture, my immediate reaction to your statement was to laugh and disregard such a foolishly naive remark. Surely, no one believes that there is a systematic way to rid the earth of all homosexuals. A few hours after reading the article that contained your quote, I became angry as I thought of others who throughout history held the same belief of irradicating people they disliked or misunderstood.

I do not understand why you would want to prevent another person from simple living a productive life. Lesbian and gay people of color are banding together like never before to jointly demand our right to be who we are. We do not ask for your permission or blessing.

Young man, I hope that you will learn quickly that human sexuality canot be categorized into right or wrong, good or bad. I will not be denied the same freedom you are automatically granted as a heterosexual to exist and flourish without societal obstacles. I will not allow bigoted individuals who want to "save society" to go unchallenged, they will be exposed for what they really are. You are not a messiah; you are a man And like you, I want to have my place in this world. I want to have my voice heard. Yes, that includes the campus of Morehouse College and any other place I choose to live, work and love.

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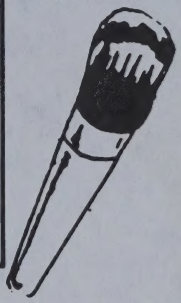

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Just My Opinion

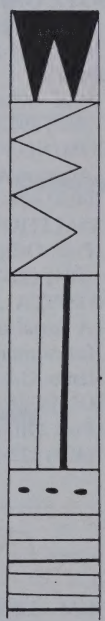
Elitism
by Alicia Banks

As a displaced Yankee, I was told that Black Atlantans were "cliquish." I have come to regard that description as an understatement. Far too many elite Black Atlantans are icy and insecure, ignorant, and utterly devoid of African consciousness. In the North, racism is far more blatant. Perhaps that is why Northern Blacks are more unified. Elite Northerners eagerly embrace everyone with intellect, passion and promise. They readily network, educate, inspire and advise Black peers. In Atlanta, elite Blacks prefer to ignore or silence competition. Plantation mentalities linger. There were very few posts inside the "big house." Today there is room for all of us. Kinship is mandatory for survival.

– – – – – – –

Friends congratulates Alicia Banks and her program "Les Chanteuses Africaines" on being featured in the March/April issue of Ms. Magazine.

Alicia Banks is the producer and host of "Les Chanteuses Africaines," a musical and literary voice of Black women, which can be heard Sundays from 1 to 4 a.m. on WRFG 89.3 FM.



In Response to a Young Sister's Question "Are You Still a Man?"
by Patrick Bell

i am no less a man because my father is straight
and loved women more than life . . . and i do not. or

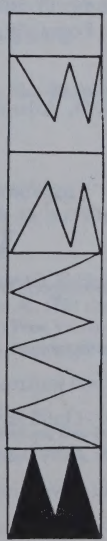
because my mother is straight and believes the
primary purpose of being is to create children
and i can not.

i am no less a man because my brother is curious
and i tell him the truth. sum it up as personal choice,
refusing to color prejudice as proper.

refusing to step to the rhythm of my neighbor's drum
or loose myself in any lover's dream,
i move forward with my own ideals and vision.

sister: i am a man who daily bends and carries the
awesome reality of loving other men and call it
complex pleasure.

reflected as a simple need.



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A political and social organization for black lesbians and gay men. Meets 1st Sunday of each month, 4 p.m., 878 Peachtree Street (corner of 7th), Atlanta, GA – (404) 239-8184

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